THE CRIMINAL CODE

THE CRIMINAL CODE

Other Plays by Mr. Flavin:

PUBLISHED

Children of the Moon

Lady of the Rose

Service for Two

Brains and other Plays

UNPUBLISHED

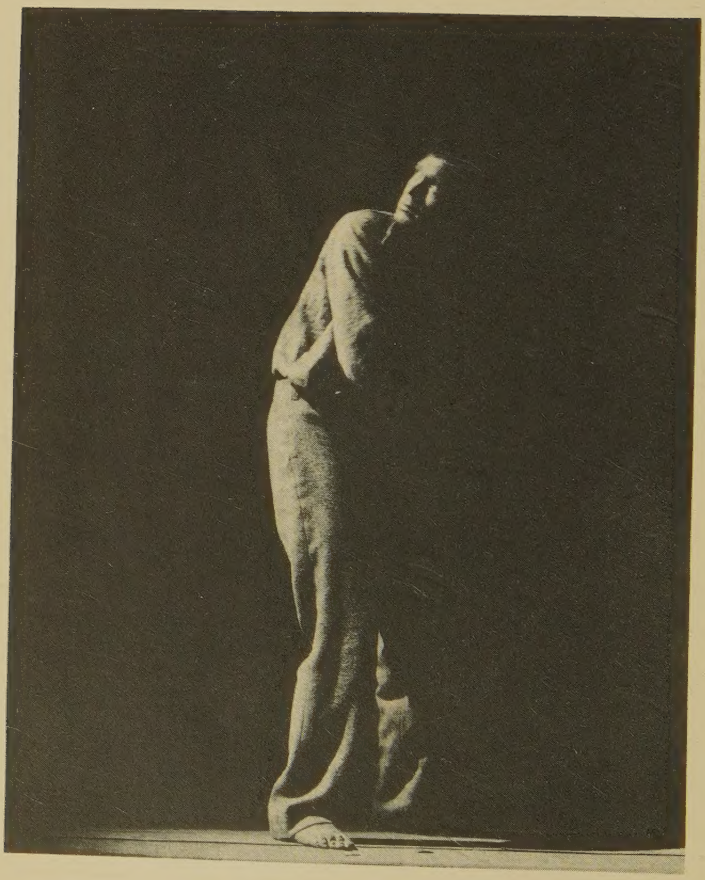
Broken Dishes

Crossroads

Spindrift

The Radical

The Road to the City



THE CRIMINAL CODE

BY *Martin Flavin*

WITH NINE STAGE DESIGNS BY
ALBERT R. JOHNSON

HORACE LIVERIGHT : NEW YORK

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WITHDRAWN
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DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER

LIST OF STAGE DESIGNS

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THE CRIMINAL CODE

was produced by William Harris, Jr. at The National Theater in New York, on October 2, 1929, with the following cast:

A Waiter	Walter Colligan
Martin Brady	Arthur Byron
Lew	Dan Poole
A Girl	Bessie Belmont
An Officer	Frank Barnes
Robert Graham	Russell Hardie
Mr. Nettlefold	Burr Caruth
Dr. Rinewulf	Walter Kingsford
Laboratory Assistant	Martin Perkins
MacManus	Thomas Findlay
Captain Gleason	Leo Curley
Simpkins	Edwin E. Vickery
Runch	William Franklin
A Negro	Norman Miller
Jim Fales	Joseph Mackin Nerney
Miss Brady	Ethel Griffies
A Clerk	Charles Day
Mary Brady	Anita Kerry
Galloway	Henry Crossen
Kurtz	Dan Poole
Stolper	Frank Barnes
Mr. Sheridan	Carroll J. Davis
Jerry	Murray Bennett

PROLOGUE

.....

Characters in the Prologue:

A Waiter

Martin Brady

Lew

A Girl

An Officer

Robert Graham

Mr. Nettlefold

.....

Scene: The Office of the State's Attorney.

PROLOGUE

The office of the State's Attorney.

A shallow room with a door at the right, and a window at the back. At the left a flat-topped desk.

Sunlight filtering through a Venetian blind casts shadows on the walls and floor, suggesting faintly the bars of a prison.

In a swivel chair behind the desk sits MARTIN BRADY, *State's Attorney, a big, broad-shouldered man, past fifty years of age. He is interrogating a witness, a bald, bleary-eyed, wizened little man with a cringing manner and a whining voice; a waiter, in fact, from Spelvin's Café and Dance Hall. At the opposite end of the desk an anæmic-looking young man with heavy, shell-rimmed glasses and a bored, weary manner, is smoking a cigarette and writing in a note book, which he holds carelessly on his knee.*

WAITER

As the Curtain rises

—and his face was as white as the cloth, sir, and he had a wild look in his eye.

BRADY

How close were you?

WAITER

As close as I am to you, sir. I'd just brought a drink to the table.

BRADY

What?

WAITER

Ginger ale, sir. Mr. Parker always carried his own liquor with him.

BRADY

Was he drunk?

WAITER

Well, sir, it's hard to say. Not more than usual, I should think.

BRADY

Yeah— Go on.

WAITER

Mr. Parker was quite cool and steady. It was the boy that seemed beside himself. He shouts out: "You've insulted this lady." And Mr. Parker stood up then and motioned him away. "Beat it, kid," he says, or something like that. But the boy keeps on shouting, crazy-like: "You apologize—apologize—apologize!" and a lot of other things like that. Then Mr. Parker cursed him, sir, and he reached back to his hip pocket. 'Twas only for his handkerchief, sir; he'd nothing else there.

And the boy picks up the carafe from the table, and strikes before any one could stop him.

BRADY

Yeah.

A pause. He leans back in his chair, a black cigar tilted from the corner of his mouth

How far did he have to move to get that water bottle?

WAITER

He'd to turn nearly around, sir.

BRADY

How long do you think that took? Stand up and show me.

WAITER

Yes, sir.

He stands, turns his back to the desk, then turns back, picks up a paper weight, and turns away again

BRADY

Yeah— And where was Parker's hand just before the blow was struck?

WAITER

I couldn't say, sir. But the boy wasn't thinking of that. He was screaming like a madman.

BRADY

Yeah— That's all. Come back at five o'clock, and sign this statement.

WAITER

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

He shambles out of the room

BRADY

Following him with his eyes; thoughtfully

Tough luck to be a waiter, Lew.

LEW

Yeah.

BRADY

Always feel as though I want to kick 'em—and then again—I don't.

A pause

Bring in the girl.

LEW

Yeah.

He goes out listlessly

The phone rings; BRADY *picks up the receiver*

BRADY

Yeah?— Joe?— Yeah— Yeah— Yeah— Did he make any statement?— Yeah— Yeah— No, to hell with it. Let the police notify the coroner— That's right— 'By.

He hangs up the receiver

A decent-looking, but disheveled and badly frightened girl of nineteen or twenty comes into the room with LEW *at her heels*

Sit down.

The girl sits nervously on the edge of a chair. LEW *resumes his place. A pause.* BRADY *studies her. She drops her eyes*

What's your name?

GIRL

Faintly

Merwyn Fontaine.

BRADY

What's your real name?

GIRL

Gertrude.

BRADY

Gertrude what?

GIRL

Gertrude Williams.

BRADY

Yeah?— Where do you live, Gerty?

GIRL

With my folks.

BRADY

Where?

GIRL

Hesitating

Twenty-three fourteen Gallup Street.

BRADY

On the level?

GERTY

Yes, sir, but—

She averts her eyes and stammers

—lately I been staying with a girl friend.

BRADY

Where?

GIRL

Miserably

Gaunt Hotel.

BRADY

Yeah?

It is almost a sigh; a pause

Ever been arrested?

GIRL

Tremulously

No, sir.

BRADY

All right, Gerty, I'll take your word for it. Now tell me what happened last night, and don't make any mistakes.

GIRL

Yes, sir.

She takes a deep breath

I—I was just walking down the street—

BRADY

What street? What time?

GIRL

Market Street, sir—about eleven—I—I was just looking in the windows—

She hesitates

BRADY

Yeah?— Go on.

GIRL

And—and a young man spoke to me.

BRADY

What'd he say?

GIRL

He just said "Hello!"—or something like that.

BRADY

Yeah?— You'd never seen him before?

GIRL

No, sir. Honest to God, I hadn't.

BRADY

Go on!

GIRL

At first I was insulted—

BRADY

Never mind that stuff, Gerty. All I want is the facts. What'd he say?

GIRL

He said he hadn't been in town long, and it was his birthday—and he was lonesome, and he asked me would I go some place with him for a dance—so I thought there was no harm in it.

BRADY

Go on!

GIRL

So we walked up to Spelvin's place.

BRADY

Who suggested that joint?

GIRL

I don't remember, now. Maybe I did.

BRADY

Yeah?— Go on.

GIRL

So we danced awhile and—and had some ginger ale.

BRADY

Nothing else?

GIRL

And some gin.

BRADY

Where'd you get the gin?

GIRL

The waiter got it.

BRADY

You'd been there before. You knew the waiter. He got the gin for *you*. Is that it?

GIRL

Yes, sir—but anybody can get gin there.

BRADY

Impatiently

Yeah. Yeah. But the boy didn't have it. He didn't know. That was your idea, eh?

GIRL

Yes, sir— We both drank it.

BRADY

A pint, like that, eh?

He indicates with his hands

GIRL

Yes, sir.

BRADY

Go on! What happened?

GIRL

This— This Mr. Parker got fresh with me on the floor.

BRADY

You knew Parker?

GIRL

Hesitating

I—I'd seen him.

BRADY

Had you ever been—out with him?

She looks down at the floor

Yeah.

A pause

Go on! What'd he do?

GIRL

He— He was just making remarks and—and putting his hands on me while I was dancing with the young man. He wanted me to come over to his table, and—and when I wouldn't, he got sore, and—and called me a name. That's what started everything. The young man that was with me, he was a perfect gentleman; he wouldn't stand for that. He went right over to Mr. Parker's table then, and—and—

BRADY

Yeah, yeah, I know all about that, Gerty. That's all.

He waves her away

Come back here at five o'clock. Don't forget now, five o'clock.

GIRL

Backing away

Yes, sir.

BRADY

And don't do any talking. Keep your mouth shut.

GIRL

Yes, sir.

She goes out

BRADY

Is that all of 'em, Lew?

LEW

Checking back through his note book

Three—five—six—seven. Yeah, that's all.

BRADY

Calculating with pursed lips

Seven eyewitnesses, and they all check on material points.

LEW

Open and shut, eh?

BRADY

Like a knife.

LEW

If young Parker should die—

A pause

BRADY

Parker's dead.

LEW

With a flash of interest

Yeah?— That right?— What is it, Mart?— Second degree murder?

BRADY

Considering

By God, it might be at that!

He picks up a sheepskin book from the desk, and opens it, murmuring to himself

Malice . . . malice . . . express or *implied*— Deliberate intent . . . no considerable provocation . . . provocation . . . provocation. . . . Hum—

The phone rings. He drops the book, and picks up the receiver

Yeah?— Yeah— Certainly I know all about it. Do you think we're asleep down here?— Yeah— Yeah— Yeah— I'm taking personal charge— Don't know! Can't tell yet. Call me up at six o'clock, and I'll give you a statement— Yeah— Yeah— Yeah— Sure, I understand— So long, Al.

He hangs up the receiver

Goddam yellow press! How they love the smell of blood!

LEW

Yeah.

BRADY

They're all alike. They'll squeal themselves deaf over this, and—old Thad Parker spends more money for advertising than any other man in this town.

LEW

That's right, Mart. I never thought of that.

BRADY

Yeah— And an election coming on.

He ponders through a pause. Briskly

Send in the boy.

LEW

Yeah.

He goes out. BRADY *lights a fresh cigar, picks up the book again, opens it and scans a page*

BRADY

Beneath his breath

Malice . . . malice . . . insufficient provocation . . . hum— Bare fear not sufficient to justify . . . Must have acted under influence of such fears alone . . . hum . . . hum—!

ROBERT GRAHAM *comes in, a clean, wholesome-looking, slender lad, pale of face now, and frightened. A heavy-looking officer, in plain clothes, is at his side.* LEW *follows, listless and detached*

OFFICER

How are you, Mr. Brady?

The officer sits down near the entrance, unfurls a newspaper, and becomes absorbed in it

BRADY

Hello, Mike.

He studies the boy, who stares back at him with agony in his eyes. To GRAHAM, *not unkindly*

Sit down, kid.

GRAHAM

In a shaky voice

I—I'd rather stand, sir.

BRADY

Yeah?

He picks up a cigar box from the desk

Have a cigar?

GRAHAM

No—thank you.

BRADY

Cigarette?

GRAHAM

No, sir.

BRADY

Don't you smoke?

GRAHAM

Yes, sir, but—I don't care to now.

BRADY

Yeah?

A pause

What's your name?

GRAHAM

Robert Graham.

BRADY

Yeah?— Did they ever call you Bob?

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

BRADY

How old are you, Bob?

GRAHAM

I was twenty, yesterday.

BRADY

Yeah?— Where do you live?

GRAHAM

Twenty-nine twelve Thirty-second Avenue.

BRADY

Boarding house?

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

BRADY

Where do you come from?

GRAHAM

Hood Valley.

BRADY

Parents?

GRAHAM

With a catch in his voice

My mother.

BRADY

Hum—

A pause

What you been doing here?

GRAHAM

I—I was a clerk at Price and Hatton's, the brokers.

BRADY

Yeah?— How long?

GRAHAM

A month. I've only been here that long.

BRADY

Any friends here?

GRAHAM

Why—why, no, sir, I don't think so. I haven't been here long enough.

BRADY

Ever been arrested before?

GRAHAM

Oh no, sir!

BRADY

Yeah.

A pause

Well, Bob, you're in a jam.

GRAHAM

Faltering

Yes, sir.

BRADY

Licking the loose wrapper of his cigar

Young Parker died this afternoon.

GRAHAM

Oh!

And he sits down abruptly, and covers his face with his hands

BRADY *opens a drawer of the desk, and takes out a flask*

BRADY

Gently

Would you like a little drink, Bob?

GRAHAM

Shuddering

No, sir.

BRADY

Doubtfully

Yeah?

He returns the bottle to the drawer, watching the boy with anxious, troubled eyes

Bob! You can make a statement to me, if you want to, but anything you say may be used against you. I want you to understand that.

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

BRADY

It looks to me like the best thing for you to do is to come clean; plead guilty and take your jolt. But your

lawyer might advise you differently. Have you got a lawyer?

GRAHAM

In a choking voice

The firm I work for sent their lawyer to see me this morning.

BRADY

What'd he say?

GRAHAM

He—he told me not to talk.

BRADY

Yeah? Then don't you say a word. You haven't said anything yet that'll do you any harm— All right, Mike, I'm through. It's tough luck, Bob. But that's the way things go. That's the way they break sometimes. You have to take 'em the way they fall.

GRAHAM

Numbly

Yes, sir.

He goes slowly across the room and out

OFFICER

At the door

I see in the papers where Oscar Nelson is talking about running for sheriff.

BRADY

Yeah?

OFFICER

Do you think he'd have a chance, Mr. Brady?

BRADY

There hasn't been a Protestant sheriff in this town in twenty years. Write your own ticket, Mike.

OFFICER

That's what I was thinking, myself— Well, so long.

He goes out

BRADY

Half to himself

The kid's got a nice personality.

LEW

Yeah.

BRADY

A smart criminal lawyer like Kelly or Goldsmith could make it pretty tough for us.

LEW

That's right, Mart.

BRADY

Say, if that kid belonged to me, I'd make a plea of self-defense and fight it out.

LEW

But Parker didn't have a gun.

BRADY

He *thought* he had—he thought he was fighting for his life. It's what you think that counts.

LEW

And he was full of gin.

BRADY

Yeah?— Suppose he was. What of it? I'd get a disagreement at the worst—a year's delay, and a new trial. The witnesses would fade away. They always do. The whole mess would get cold. The papers would have something else to yawp about— I'd get him off. He'd never serve a day.

LEW

With faint admiration

I guess you could, Mart.

BRADY

A thing like this could happen to any one—to me, to you, to any one— It's just a rotten break, that's all— Yeah!

The final word is almost a sigh. He stands with his hands buried in his pockets

LEW

Very vaguely

Yeah?

The phone rings. BRADY *picks it up*

BRADY

Yeah?—who?— Nettlefold?— Never heard of him. What does he want?— Oh!— Send him in.

He hangs up the receiver

Better get those statements transcribed, Lew.

LEW

Yeah.

He gets up and starts to move away

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BRADY

Call up the papers, too— Tell 'em—

He hesitates, chewing the end of his cigar

Tell 'em I'm taking personal charge, myself— Tell 'em we promise a quick conviction, and—and—oh! the usual tripe.

LEW

Yeah.

He goes out

MR. NETTLEFOLD, *an elderly gentleman of refined appearance, comes into the room*

NETTLEFOLD

I beg your pardon.

He peers about short-sightedly through his gold-rimmed eye glasses. Doubtfully

Mr. Brady?

BRADY

Yeah. Come in.

NETTLEFOLD

Trotting to the desk, and presenting a card

I am Horace Nettlefold of Nettlefold, Lambskin and Kroll.

BRADY

Oh, yes! Pleased to meet you.

They shake hands

Have a chair.

NETTLEFOLD

Er—thank you.

He seats himself near the desk

BRADY

Reaching for cigar box

Have a smoke?

NETTLEFOLD

Er—thank you, no.

His voice is as gentle and courteous as his manner

We are attorneys, Mr. Brady, for Price and Hatton, the stock brokers.

BRADY

Yeah?

NETTLEFOLD

It appears that a young man who has been in their employ, is involved in an—er—unfortunate affair.

BRADY

Looking extremely serious and judicial

Yeah.

NETTLEFOLD

Mr. Price has asked me as a personal favor to interest myself in the case. I am not of course a criminal lawyer, Mr. Brady.

BRADY *nods*

I have not, since my early years at the bar, been in contact with—er—criminal procedure.

BRADY

Yeah.

NETTLEFOLD

But I could not very well disregard the request of an old friend and client.

BRADY *murmurs sympathetically*

I called on the boy this morning, and I must confess that I was most agreeably impressed with his personality.

BRADY

Noncommittally

Yeah.

A pause

NETTLEFOLD

Tapping a newspaper in his hand

I—I have been shocked and grieved to learn by the afternoon paper that—er—the other young man is—dead.

A pause. BRADY *drums with his fingers on the desk*

I thought—er—in the circumstances, it would be in order for me to call on you, and—er—get your point of view.

BRADY

Expansively

I'm glad you came over, Mr. Nettlefold, very glad. I'll be perfectly frank with you. That's my way of doing business.

He leans back in his chair and moistens the wrapper of his cigar.

NETTLEFOLD

Er—thank you very much.

BRADY

This case, as I see it, is open and shut like a knife. The boy, Graham, picks up a broad on the street.

NETTLEFOLD

I beg your pardon?

BRADY

Raising his voice

A broad—a—a streetwalker—a prostitute.

NETTLEFOLD

Oh, yes!

BRADY

Yeah— He takes her to Spelvin's, a notorious joint.

MR. NETTLEFOLD *nods*

He buys a pint of gin, and they drink it up between them in an hour.

NETTLEFOLD *nods and sighs*

The broad runs into an old flame. Graham is jealous. He picks a quarrel with this fellow. Parker doesn't want a quarrel, tries to avoid it. And Graham picks up a water bottle, and caves in his skull— There's our case, Mr. Nettlefold, in a nut-shell.

NETTLEFOLD

Er—substantially, Mr. Brady.

He sighs, and shakes his head

BRADY

Confirmed by the statements of seven or more eye-witnesses—

He folds his arms; severely

We propose to ask for a verdict of second degree murder.

NETTLEFOLD

Murder?— Dear me, Mr. Brady!

BRADY

Yeah.

He nods

NETTLEFOLD

May I ask what penalty a conviction would involve?

BRADY

Ten to life.

NETTLEFOLD

Murmuring

Dear me! Dear me! That seems very hard.

BRADY

It's the law of this commonwealth.

He opens the code, and hands it across the desk

You'll find it in the code.

NETTLEFOLD

Taking the book, but not glancing at it

I haven't had occasion to consult the criminal code in twenty years or more.

BRADY

Yeah?— Well, it's my bible, Mr. Nettlefold.

He laughs

NETTLEFOLD

Yes—er—I suppose so.

A pause

But this unfortunate boy, he meant no harm, Mr. Brady— It—it was an accident.

BRADY

And Parker is dead.

NETTLEFOLD

Yes, yes, I quite understand that. But—er—a misunderstanding—extenuating circumstances—excitation of passion from poisonous liquor—an irresponsible, unguarded moment— These wretched things *do* happen.

BRADY *is silent, and impassive*

Perhaps you have a boy of your own, Mr. Brady?

BRADY

No, I have a girl.

NETTLEFOLD

Murmuring

Yes. Well, it seems very hard—

BRADY

Abruptly

I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Mr. Nettlefold.

NETTLEFOLD

Leaning forward; quickly

Please!

BRADY

You're a high class man. I can see that, and I can talk to you straight from the shoulder.

NETTLEFOLD

Thank you.

BRADY

This is an open and shut case, so far as I can see. I think the chances are ten to one against this boy before a jury. Old Thaddeus Parker is a big man and a rich man, and the papers will be with him. The kid might get twenty years—he might get life.

A pause. NETTLEFOLD *leans forward eagerly*

But I'll tell you what I'll do— If you want to plead him guilty to manslaughter, I'll let it go at that.

NETTLEFOLD

Vaguely

Manslaughter? And—er—what would that involve?

BRADY

Carelessly

A maximum of ten years.

NETTLEFOLD

Ten years?— Dear me!

BRADY

The newspapers will raise hell with me, and there's an election just a few months off, but—no matter— I'll do it.

NETTLEFOLD

But ten years is a long time, Mr. Brady—a big piece out of a boy's life—and—and the stain on him—

BRADY

Passionately

My God, man, what do you want? There's a boy laying on a slab in the morgue! There's a big piece out of his

life—all of it. Somebody's got to pay for that—something!

NETTLEFOLD

Rising

But—

BRADY

The old Mosaic law, Mr. Nettlefold: "An eye for an eye." That's the basis and foundation of our criminal code— Somebody's got to pay.

He thumps the desk with his fist

NETTLEFOLD

Yes, yes, I quite see your point.

He sighs

But I can't help thinking of the effect of imprisonment —what it may do to this youth—how it may blight his life—

BRADY

Think it over. Talk it over with the boy, and with your office.

NETTLEFOLD

A very grave responsibility—very!

BRADY

Think it over, carefully. Take your time, and let me know in a day or so.

NETTLEFOLD

Backing away

Yes, I'll do that, Mr. Brady. Thank you very much for your—er—courtesy. Good day.

BRADY

'S all right— Pleased to have met you— Good day.

NETTLEFOLD *goes out*

BRADY *sits down by the desk; and for a moment seems to reflect. He smiles; and murmurs to himself*

Like taking candy from a child, yeah!

Absently he picks the book up from the desk, and turns the pages; the smile fades from his face. He puts the book down on the desk; grimly, to himself

Christ!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

END OF PROLOGUE

SIX YEARS ELAPSE

.....

The action of the play passes now into a prison,—a place of gray concrete and iron bars and lofty walls, and deep black shadows.

A false proscenium spans the stage and in it rises and falls between the scenes, a massive section of gray wall.

Gray clad men with gray pinched faces move here and there through cold, gray light.

The play goes on—

THE CRIMINAL CODE

.....

Characters in the Play

Dr. Rinewulf
Robert Graham
An Assistant
MacManus
Martin Brady
Captain Gleason
Simpkins
Jim Fales
Runch
Miss Brady
A Clerk
Mary Brady
Galloway
Kurtz
Stolper
Jerry
Mr. Sheridan

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

.....

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: The Laboratory
SCENE 2: The Jute Mill
SCENE 3: The Mess Hall
SCENE 4: The Lockup
SCENE 5: A Cell
SCENE 6: The Warden's Office

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: The Warden's Living Room
SCENE 2: The Office

ACT THREE

SCENE 1: The Living Room
SCENE 2: The Office
SCENE 3: The Dungeon
SCENE 4: The Prison Yard
SCENE 5: The Office

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE I

The Laboratory.

A gray, grim room, with doors at right and left, and lofty steel barred windows at the back.

In the center, beneath a hooded light, a man is sitting on a low stool. This man is Convict No. 23499, once known as ROBERT GRAHAM. *He wears the coarse, gray convict uniform. Across the pocket of his shirt is sewn a white strip of cloth on which is stamped his number.*

Close by stands DR. RINEWULF, *a thin, frail-looking man, with restless eyes, and a harsh, unfeeling voice, with just a trace of foreign accent. He wears a white laboratory coat, and has a stethoscope in his hand.*

At one side stands his convict assistant; a pale-faced, tight-lipped, old-looking young man, in the jacket and trousers of a hospital interne. He holds in his hand a history chart.

RINEWULF

Put on your shoes!

The boy, without rising, pulls on a pair of shapeless brogans

You are not sick— Do you understand?

The boy does not raise his head

You say you have no appetite—you cannot sleep—you have bad dreams— Humph!

He shrugs slightly, studies the downcast face, swinging his stethoscope

Physically you are not sick.

A pause. He calls out sharply

What do you say, Doctor?

The assistant, his eyes upon the chart, shrugs his shoulders

You see?— I can find nothing wrong with you. My assistant can find nothing wrong with you— You—

He hesitates

You are neurotic— Outside, I would prescribe a change —the mountains or the sea. Hum!— It is not medicine you need. You understand?

No answer. Sharply

Look at me!

The boy shifts his feet

Look at me, I say!

The boy raises his head slowly, meets RINEWULF'S *eye, and as quickly looks away and down*

Humph!

It is almost a sigh. Harshly

Where do you work?

GRAHAM

In the jute mill.

His voice is as empty of expression as his face

RINEWULF

How long have you been there?

GRAHAM

Six years.

RINEWULF

Humph!— You can go.

GRAHAM *turns and shuffles from the room, and* RINEWULF *watches him until he disappears from sight. He goes on speaking half to himself*

Jute mill—jute mill—six years!

Absently he lights a cigarette

Breaking of morale— You see it in his eyes— Environmental— Mechanistic occupation— Sex starvation— God knows what. You cannot find them with a stethoscope, eh, Doctor?

ASSISTANT

Expressionlessly

As you say, Doctor.

He stands at attention like a statue

RINEWULF

It is a pity— Yes—a pity.

He sighs

There is something there worth saving, and—it is almost gone!

Voices outside. The assistant moves back and turns his face away to avoid attention. RINEWULF *turns quickly toward the door, as a group of men come into the room. The leader of the group is one,* MACMANUS, *Secretary of the Prison Commission, a burly, overfat, coarse man, with a broad, flat face, a boisterous voice, and the manner of a ward politician. Behind him is* MARTIN BRADY, *nearing sixty now, quite gray—a bit less active physically, less sure of himself. Behind him, the chaplain of the prison, a dull, weary-looking man of middle age, in mussy, semi-clerical garb. And last, the Captain of the yard,* GLEASON, *a big, heavy, ponderous, stupid man in khaki-colored uniform, and carrying a loaded cane with a sharp, iron ferrule*

MACMANUS

Rough, jovial, and overbearing

Meet Dr. Rinewulf, Warden— The new warden, Doc.— Mart Brady.

BRADY

Pleased to meet you, Doctor.

RINEWULF

How do you do?

MACMANUS

You remember?— Used to be State's Attorney up in

town— Ought to be governor of the state, by rights!

BRADY *and* RINEWULF *shake hands*

GLEASON *stands near the door;* SIMPKINS, *the chaplain, hands in pockets, loiters near him.* MACMANUS *is host. The three of them have toward* RINEWULF *an attitude of amused toleration, which he repays with scarcely-concealed contempt.*

MACMANUS, *pointing after the assistant, who has just left the room*

Say, Mart, see that bird that just went out?

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

That's Kellogg. Remember?— The guy that got the girl in trouble a few years back, and killed her. Cut her up and packed her in a trunk— Remember?

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

And the Doc here turns him loose with all the knives in the house.

RINEWULF

He is a good surgeon. He has a fine mind, and a steady hand. He operates on me, myself.

MACMANUS

Delighted

Can you beat it?— Well—

He waves his arm around like a proud proprietor

We got everything here, Mart—everything but an obstetric ward!

SIMPKINS *and* GLEASON *are greatly amused.* BRADY *merely smiles. There is a troubled look about his eyes*

Hospital upstairs— Morgue in the cellar— Drug store— X-Ray machines, the best that money'll buy— Operating rooms. You ought to see 'em, Mart. They got nothing better in the city— That's the only way we keep the Doc.— He likes to tinker with 'em.

He grins at RINEWULF *condescendingly*

Tell us about that nigger, Doc.— Remember, Gleason?

GLEASON

Grinning

Yes, sir.

MACMANUS

He tells it, himself; with great good humor

Say, we had a nigger in here, Mart, waiting for the rope—homeliest nigger I ever see. That right, Gleason?

GLEASON

That's right, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

He had lips like that—

He holds out his fist

—and a nose that was flat on his face like an ape,—and some guy had carved him with a razor on one side. Well, the Doc here went to work on him, and, when he got through, there was nothing left of that bird but his

fingerprints— Honest, Mart, he give him a nose like a Jew banker. Say! That nigger was the happiest dinge you ever see, and him only a week ahead of the trap— Can you beat it?

He laughs uproariously

Tell 'em what he said, Simpkins.

SIMPKINS

A bit sheepishly

He said—he would be glad to meet God with a better face.

BRADY *moves uncomfortably, and frowns*

MACMANUS

Tie that one!

He chuckles

Oh, the Doc. likes to tinker with 'em!— He gets a kick out of it, some way.

GLEASON

Excuse me, Mr. MacManus, but if you want to get to the jute mill before the whistle blows—

MACMANUS

That's right, Mart.

He glances at his watch

Three o'clock. We got to move along. So long, Doc— see you later.

He turns toward the door

BRADY

Going up to RINEWULF

I'm very glad to've met you, Doctor.

He holds out his hand. Instinctively RINEWULF *likes the man*

It's been very interesting.

They shake hands

I— I'd like to see all around your plant some time.

RINEWULF

I should be very glad to show you.

BRADY

Thank you. And if there's anything I can do to help—

RINEWULF

Oh, yes!— Yes. Thank you.

MACMANUS

At the door

Come on, Mart. Let's go.

BRADY *goes out behind* MACMANUS. SIMPKINS *and* GLEASON *follow*

RINEWULF *stands for a moment with a calculating expression in his eyes*

RINEWULF

Calling sharply

Doctor!

ASSISTANT

Coming into the room

Did you call, sir?

RINEWULF

Not glancing at the man

What was the number of that boy?

Act One, SCENE II, The Jute Mill

The assistant picks up the chart from the table, where he had put it down when he went out

ASSISTANT

Glancing at chart

Number two-three-four-nine-nine.

RINEWULF

Scribbling the number on the back of an envelope

two-three-four-nine-nine

ASSISTANT

Is that all, sir?

RINEWULF

Yes.

The Wall descends

END OF SCENE I

SCENE II

The Jute Mill.

Gray, concrete walls; and dull, gray light.

A solid bridge, with an iron handrail, crossing the stage from left to right. In front of it, bales of jute.

Terrific din and clatter of machinery. Convicts are carrying bales, and stacking them against the bridge.

MACMANUS *and his party are ascending, from the back, invisible stairs which lead to this observation point.*

MACMANUS

As he ascends the stairs; his words inaudible in the terrific clamor

Long walk around this dump, Mart—twenty-seven acres inside the walls— Mind now, don't stub your toe!

He comes into view, with BRADY *at his heels, and* GLEASON *and* SIMPKINS *respectfully in the background*

There—take a slant at that! Some factory, eh?

A factory whistle blows, and the machinery stops

Five thousand bales per day!

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

Why not?— There's two thousand five hundred men in here, eh, Captain?

GLEASON

Two thousand five hundred and fifty-eight.

MACMANUS

Speed 'em up! Speed 'em up! Make the crooks earn their keep— That's what I say.

He laughs

BRADY

Thoughtfully

Pretty tough, eh?

FALES *comes in, carrying a bale of jute; he is a tall, slender man,* 40 *perhaps, but gray, with a lean, crafty face. A small mustache adorns his lip, and he wears his prison garb with, almost, a jaunty air. He slaps the dust out of his shirt, and sits down, comfortably, upon the jute*

MACMANUS

Tough? They like it, Mart— Gives 'em something to do, something to think about. Eh, Captain?

GLEASON

That's right, Mr. MacManus.

BRADY

Vaguely

Yeah.

He gazes about

MACMANUS

Noticing FALES, *and pointing at him*

See that bird, Mart?

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

Know who it is?

BRADY

No.

MACMANUS

Impressively

That's Jim Fales.

BRADY

Yeah?

He looks at the man with interest

MACMANUS

Yegg man, train robber. God knows what. Sharp as a trap, and slippery as an eel. One of the worst we've got, eh, Captain?

GLEASON

That's right, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

He's doing twenty years this time. Take care of him—It takes two cards to hold his record, Mart.

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

Well—better be going, eh?

He glances at his watch

You want to see 'em eat their supper, Mart. It's quite a sight, I tell you.

He turns away and, followed by the others, descends the stairs

They get their feed at half past three. Have to have 'em under lock and key a little after four. The dark comes on so fast these winter days, you can't take any chances, Mart. It's quite a sight to see 'em eat. Yeah, you bet.

Their voices fade away as they disappear from sight

GRAHAM *comes in carrying a bale of jute. He puts it down on the pile; and wearily sinks down beside* FALES

FALES

What did the Doc say, kid?

GRAHAM

Nothing.

His voice is listless, empty; his eyes dull; his body sagging. The spirit within him is close to the breaking-point

FALES

Studying him sharply

Don't let these bastards get your goat now, Bob. You've done the long end of your stretch, and you're just a kid. You've got a life ahead of you. Pull yourself together. If you smash up now, you're gone.

GRAHAM

I know.

He buries his face in his hands

But I can't— I can't go on!

FALES

Sure you can. You've got to grit your teeth, and stick it out.

He studies him for a long moment, with troubled eyes; cheerfully seeking to divert the boy

Did I ever tell you the story of Sam Price?

No answer

The gamest little cuss I ever knew. . . . Well, this was

years ago, when I was doing my first jolt—upstate.

He lights his cigarette, and leans back comfortably

They caught Sam in a break, and tried to make him squeal—turn up his pals. But Sam was game. He wouldn't say a word. And then they threw him in the dungeon.

GRAHAM *begins to raise his head*

Six feet of concrete all around him. Bread and water once a day, and every seventh day a bucket meal—cold slop you wouldn't feed a dog. No light, no sound—nothing!

GRAHAM

God!

FALES

A dozen times a day the Captain would come down there with a guard, and try to pry it out of him. They used up all the stunts they knew, and they knew plenty, Bob.

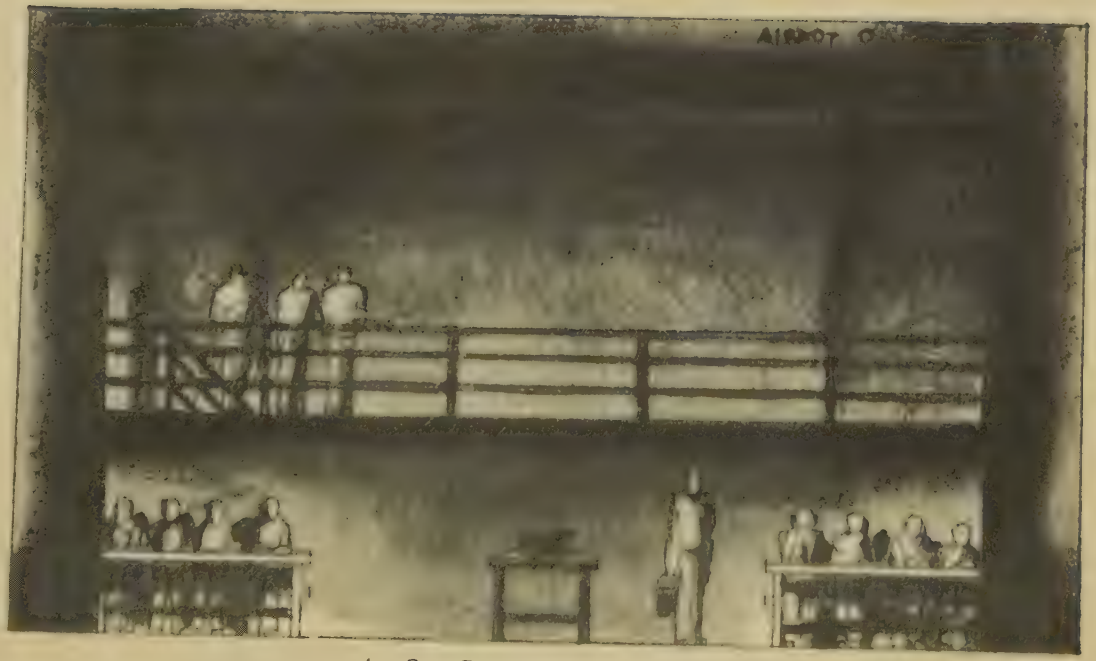
GRAHAM *is intent upon the story*

Well, Sam had friends, and they knew what was going on down there. So some one sneaked a knife, and some one else managed to plant it in the bucket with Sam's food. There was of course just one chance in a hundred that it might get by— He won that bet— He got it—

GRAHAM

Tensely

Yes?



Act One, SCENE III, The Mess Hall

FALES

That night the Captain comes around to stage a little extra torture. They open up the door, and find Sam stretched out on the floor, apparently all in—unconscious. The Captain sends the guard to fetch the doctor.

GRAHAM

Yes?

FALES

And then . . .

The descending Wall interrupts his speech

END OF SCENE II

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SCENE III

The Mess Hall.

Same as Scene II.

Instead of bales of jute, long, narrow tables are at each side, close to the bridge and between them, in the center, a serving table piled high with cups and chunks of bread.

Behind the table, at the left, and facing to the front, are, seated in this order: GRAHAM, FALES, RUNCH *(a small, wiry, ferret-faced man of uncertain age), and a negro. At the table on the opposite*

side are seated four other convicts. They are eating and chatting among themselves; all save GRAHAM, *who sits stolidly, with his elbows on the table, and his chin cupped in his hands. There is the buzz and drone of many voices—four thousand men, stretched out into the vague space beyond the footlights; rattle of plates and spoons and cups, and scraping of feet and benches on the concrete floor.*

Again the Warden's party mount the steps beyond the bridge, MACMANUS *chatting inaudibly against the din.*

MACMANUS

This building's pretty new—cost close to a million to complete. Would have cost a couple, if we hadn't had the labor here for nothing. They did it, all themselves. Like making a guy dig his own grave. Eh, Mart?

He appears upon the bridge, BRADY *at his side;* SIMPKINS *and* GLEASON *close behind*

A convict glances up, a second and a third look furtively over their shoulders; they nudge each other. The noise subsides

MACMANUS, *becoming audible*

Now there's a dinner party for you—looks like a banquet up in town, but no after-dinner speeches, Mart. That's something, eh?

BRADY

Yeah.

The voices have dwindled now to a faint muttering sound, which continues throughout the scene

MACMANUS

Quite a sight, Mart. Four thousand men in here, eh, Gleason?

GLEASON

Four thousand and seventy-nine, Mr. MacManus.

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

We got it down to twenty-three cents a day per head. That right, Captain?

GLEASON

Twenty-three and a half, sir.

MACMANUS

Some system, Mart! They can't feed the bears in the park for that.

BRADY

What are they eating?

MACMANUS

Spaghetti, coffee, bread—all the bread they want. No man goes out of here hungry.

BRADY

What've they got in those little bags?

MACMANUS

Sugar. They get it once a week. And they gamble with it, too. Sugar and tobacco, that's their wampum, Mart.

He laughs

BRADY

Half to himself

Tough! Pretty tough!

MACMANUS

Tough? Don't kid yourself, Mart. It's better grub than most of them ever had. Good wholesome food, plenty of vitamins and calories and all that stuff. I never see none of 'em losing any weight in here, eh, Captain?

GLEASON

That's right, Mr. MacManus.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

See Jim Fales sitting over there?

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

Notice the bird the other side of him. He's an ex-hophead, name of Runch. Just an ordinary dip. But if you ever want an earful out of him, Mart, give him a shot of coke, and he'll go to hell for the second.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

Chuckling

There's a group for you: Runch, a hophead; Jim Fales, professional crook; that big buck nigger, just a plain moron; and that kid on the end—I don't know him—

BRADY

Just a bad break, maybe.

MACMANUS

Yeah, but there they are: Moron, hophead, professional crook, and—

BRADY

The whole history of a prison.

MACMANUS

Yeah, that's right, Mart; you said it. Well—

He glances at his watch

—better be getting on, eh? I want you to see the lockup. To me, that's the greatest show of all.

He moves toward the steps and down, BRADY *at his side,* SIMPKINS *and* GLEASON *following, as they did before*

Four thousand men and one hundred and twenty-three guards. That right, Gleason?

GLEASON

One hundred and twenty-five, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

That takes system, Mart. Just a machine, the whole damn thing, one big machine.

Their voices fade away

FALES

Calling softly to a youthful convict, who is passing back and forth, with a bucket full of coffee

Here, boy, a little more Java, please.

BOY

You betcha, Jim.

He fills FALES'S *cup with a dipper*

RUNCH

In a whining voice

Stinkin' mud.

BOY

To GRAHAM

You want some more, Bob?

GRAHAM *shakes his head*

RUNCH

Gimme a little sugar, Jim.

FALES

Softly; amiably

Why, you God damn gambling bastard—

He weighs the bag in his hand, considering

Well—

He pours a little sugar into RUNCH'S *cup*

That's seven you owe me.

RUNCH

Thanks, Jim. I'll win it back.

FALES

You will like hell. These crooks in here are too sharp for you, Runch. You're out of your class.

RUNCH

Spooning the contents of his plate

Slop! Slop!—Jesus! I'd sell my soul for a plate of ham and eggs.

FALES

In another voice; cuttingly sharp and dangerous
Cut that out, you God damn fool!—Cut it out!

RUNCH *bends over his plate, muttering.* FALES *turns quickly to* GRAHAM, *who has not moved; cheerfully*

How they coming, kid?

He looks down at the untouched plate
Say, what's the big idea? You've got to eat, Bob. You know you've got to eat.

GRAHAM

I can't, Jim—I can't!

FALES

Of course you can. Don't let it get your goat, kid. That's the end of everything— Come on now, be a sport! Clean up that plate!

GRAHAM

I can't.

His fists clench; and his voice is shrill
I won't—by God, I can't!

He buries his face in his hands

A CONVICT

From the table on the other side
Christ! What's got into that guy?

ANOTHER CONVICT

Sick of the slop, I guess.

FALES

Hum . . .

A pause; gently; persuasively

Did I ever tell you about the time I went to Buenos Aires, Bob?

No answer

You know my pal, Ned Galloway, the warden's butler?

GRAHAM *nods*

There's a white man, Bob; the whitest man I've ever known, and one of the smartest. He's even fooled these bulls in here. They think they've got his record, but they don't know half of it.

GRAHAM *puts down his hands*

He had a job as steward on an ocean liner. That was the way he worked, that sort of thing. And— God!— but, he was good at it. Well, he wanted me to make this trip to Buenos Aires, and so . . .

The descending Wall interrupts his speech

END OF SCENE III

SCENE IV

The Lockup.

Same as Scenes II and III.

MACMANUS, BRADY *and* GLEASON *are standing on the bridge, but looking back now at tiers of steel-*

Act One, SCENE IV, The Lock Up

barred cells which rise one above the other. BRADY *is standing a little to the front. His arms are folded; his shoulders sag; there is a frowning, troubled look upon his face.*

On narrow balconies before each cell two convicts stand waiting a signal to enter. Among these convicts one recognizes GRAHAM, FALES *and* RUNCH.

There is the murmuring, unintelligible hum of four thousand voices, talking, whispering; it echoes—reverberates against the steel, and billows into a roaring wave of sound.

An electric gong cuts through the roar which subsides immediately.

MACMANUS

Well, here's our bird cage, Mart.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

The new cell block. A cage within a cage. The last word in modern prison construction. Steel and concrete. Why, a safe blower with a kit of tools couldn't work his way out of that, eh, Captain?

GLEASON

That's right, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

Two thousand cells and every one of them's got air and light.

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

Yeah.

He glances at his watch

When the bell rings again, you'll see a funny thing, Mart.

He holds the watch in his hand, watching the second hand

BRADY

Yeah?

A pause

What do they do—in there?

MACMANUS

Anything they like. Talk, smoke, read, play cards, anything—till nine o'clock, and then we put the cell lights out.

BRADY

Softly

Tough—it's pretty tough.

MACMANUS

Tough?— They like it. They're champing at the bit to get in now. Am I right, Captain?

GLEASON

They like to get into their cells. Yes, sir, that's right.

BRADY

Why?

GLEASON

Vaguely

Well, sir, I've never given any thought to it. I suppose because their time's their own once they're locked up. They can do what they please then.

BRADY

In there?

GLEASON *shuffles his feet. The thing is getting rather deep for him*

MACMANUS

His eyes on his watch

Keep your eyes open, Mart— Mark time!— Now!

The gong rings. The convicts step into their cells. Terrific, deafening crash of steel. Twilight has vanished and, in its place, the searing white of arc lights floods the scene. The hum subsides into the drone of swarming bees

Pocketing his watch. Exultantly

That's system, Mart.

BRADY

Blinking his eyes against the glare

Yeah.

MACMANUS

One lever locks the door of every cell.

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

I suppose I've seen this thing a hundred times, but I

always get a kick out of it, Mart. . . . You're looking at four thousand men, and the next second—click!—they're gone!— Just as if they were wiped off the face of the earth.

BRADY

Between his teeth

Yeah.

MACMANUS

Well—let's go— I want to see your daughter and your sister, Mart; and then I've got to beat it back to town.

BRADY

Is it always light like that?

MACMANUS

As they descend the steps

All night. Light is the enemy of crooks, you know. And then these doors are locked. There's only two men left in the building besides the cons—a guard on the floor in case any one gets sick, you know, and a gun man on the bridge inside. Wherever the guard moves inside that block, the gun man follows him along the bridge, covering him with the gun. Some system, Mart!

They disappear from sight

The Wall descends

END OF SCENE IV

Act One. SCENE V, A Cell

SCENE V

A cell.

The long dimension of this narrow vault parallels the footlights. There is a light-bulb in the ceiling.

Against the back wall are two narrow bunks with drab blankets, one above the other. In the upper bunk FALES *is stretched out, comfortably, reading a newspaper.* GRAHAM *is sitting on the edge of the lower bunk, his elbows on his knees, his chin in his hands.*

FALES

Commenting on the news

They say Dempsey's going to stage a come-back. He's a sucker if he tries. Tunney finished him the second time for keeps.

A pause

"Tia Juana Race Results" . . . hum . . . hum. . . . I hear Blumberg cleaned up five hundred sacks of Bull on his book last month.

He laughs softly

You can't beat those guys. They get rich even in stir.

A pause; he puts the paper down, and listens; then leans over the edge of the bunk

What are you doing, kid?

GRAHAM

Nothing.

FALES

Haven't you got anything to read?

GRAHAM

I don't want to read.

FALES

You used to be reading all the time.

A pause

Want to play a game of pinochle, or dominoes?

GRAHAM

No, no— No!

His voice rises shrilly, crazily. He stands up

I can't— I can't go on with it— I can't— I won't! Let me out! Let me out! For God's sake, let me out!

FALES

Beneath his breath

Christ!

And he drops from his bunk like a cat, seizes the boy in his arms, and covers his mouth with his hand

A VOICE

Threatening from afar

Cut that out!

GRAHAM

Struggling, half sobbing

No, no— No!— No!

FALES

Between his teeth

Quiet, God damn you,—steady now! Steady, I say—Not a word.

The boy begins to sob

They'll jerk you out of here and throw you in the cooler just that quick.

GRAHAM *sinks down on the edge of the bunk*

Hush now!— Hush!

VOICE

Close by now; angry and gruff

Who was that yelling? I don't want to hear no more of it.

The tap of a cane, which fades away

FALES

Regarding the boy, with a helpless expression

Whew! That was a close call. You've got to pull yourself together, Bob.

GRAHAM

Moaning

I can't—I wish I was dead! I wish I was in hell.

FALES

You've got your wish, my son.

He sits down on the bunk at GRAHAM'S *side*

It's tough, kid. Of course it's tough. But you're young, and you've almost done your time. But take a slant at me. I'm on the shady side of forty at the start of a twenty-year jolt. I couldn't last the half of it in here.

I've got bad lungs. The jute is working on them now. I've got a stake outside, planted where it's safe—enough to keep me all my life in comfort.

A pause; dreamily

There's a little place in Switzerland where I'd like to settle down and wait for the old man with the scythe. Now that's tough, eh?

GRAHAM

Yes.

A pause. FALES *regards him with a calculating expression*

FALES

Coming to a decision

I'll tell you something, Bob— I didn't mean to tell you this at all. You're not a crook; your record's clean in here; but, hell!—I can't stand by and see you go to smash.

A pause. GRAHAM *looks up with a flash of interest.* FALES *lowers his voice*

I'm going to make a break for it.

GRAHAM

Breathlessly

You are?

FALES

Why not? It's the only chance I've got.

GRAHAM

Tensely

Take me with you, Jim.

FALES

You think it over, kid. It's always a long shot. Nine out of every ten come back.

GRAHAM

Whispering passionately

I don't *care,* Jim. If I could only get one breath of air outside—one good, square meal! If—if I could see a woman's face again— I dream of those things, Jim, night after night— Oh God! such dreams!

FALES

Yes, I know, but think it over, Bob—and take your time.

GRAHAM

Eagerly

But when, and how?

FALES

There's four in on it now: myself, Dutch Trask, Pete Grimes, and Runch.

GRAHAM

Runch?

FALES

I'm not very keen on him, myself—
He was a hophead once. You can't ever count on them. But he's a pal of Grimes, and Grimes has framed the trick.

GRAHAM

But how?

FALES

Very softly

It's an inside job, of course. Those are the only ones that have a chance.

GRAHAM

Tense with eagerness

Yes?

FALES

There's a guard in here with an itching palm. Grimes got a line on him from outside. He thinks he's safe. For a thousand bucks he'd go to hell, Grimes says.

GRAHAM

Yes?

FALES

They've framed the whole thing up outside. It works like this . . .

The descending Wall interrupts his speech

END OF SCENE V

SCENE VI

The Warden's Office.

A bare, gray, cheerless room, built in the wall of the prison, above the entrance gate. On the right side

Act One. SCENE VI, The Warden's Office

there are two doors; that nearer the back leading to an alcove occupied by the Warden's clerk; the other to a corridor connected with the living quarters of the Warden. On the opposite side is a third door which opens upon a flight of stairs descending to a vestibule between the inner and outer gates of the prison. The furniture consists of a desk and several chairs.

There are two women in the room. The elder, MISS ELLEN BRADY, *is the Warden's sister, of middle age, a bit carping in speech and manner, decently and sedately dressed. She sits primly on a chair near the desk. Her face is clouded. The younger woman is* MARY BRADY, *the Warden's daughter, a girl of twenty-five, slender, not perhaps pretty, but good to look at, with black hair, and keen, blue eyes suggestive of her father's. She stands by the window, looking out into the prison yard.*

MISS BRADY

Plaintively

This is no sort of place for your father, Mary. He'll not be happy here.

She sighs

A man who should be sitting in the governor's mansion.

The Warden's clerk comes in, with catlike tread, from the alcove; a gray-haired, gray-clad man. He

pauses just within the room and clears his throat

Oh!

A faint, Victorian squeak

THE CLERK

Without a trace of feeling

I beg your pardon, madam.

He shrugs his shoulders slightly, and turns to the girl, who is regarding him frankly, curiously

I am the Warden's clerk. I am looking for the Warden.

MARY

A clear, frank voice

He has gone out—out there.

She points through the window

THE CLERK

Thank you.

He turns on his heel, and goes back into the alcove

MISS BRADY

Oh! He gave me such a start—I shall never get used to this—never!

SIMPKINS *comes in from the stairs. He seems rather to loiter than to come—a little vague, a little sheepish*

SIMPKINS

Er—excuse me—I thought, perhaps, I might be of some—er—service to you, ladies.

MISS BRADY

Oh, yes, please! We feel so utterly lost here, Mr. Simpkins,—in—in prison.

MARY *looks at* SIMPKINS *appraisingly, and looks away again*

SIMPKINS

Vaguely

Yes. Well—we're in the wall, you see. The main entrance is below this room, reached by those stairs. It is a sort of vestibule, with great barred gates on either side. The turnkey's office opens into it.... That corridor leads to your apartments.

MISS BRADY

Nervously

But do you think it is quite safe?

SIMPKINS

Oh yes! Quite safe—quite.

He wanders to the window, MISS BRADY *following*

That is the main court of the prison.

MISS BRADY

Oh, what a lovely garden. Such exquisite flowers! Do they appreciate it?

SIMPKINS

Without conviction

Oh yes!— Yes; I think they do.

MISS BRADY

Do you find them penitent, Mr. Simpkins?

SIMPKINS

Oh yes!— Well—

He hesitates, and sighs

Er—not as penitent as we might hope.

MISS BRADY

I should think the consolation of religion would be a great blessing to them.

SIMPKINS

Very lamely

Er—yes—one would think so.

He points

That large building on the right is the new cell block. On the left, the hospital and Dr. Rinewulf's laboratory. Beyond it is the mess hall.

MARY

Where are the dungeons?

SIMPKINS

Dungeons?— Oh yes!

He seems uncomfortable, and particularly sheepish

Well—er—they are behind the hospital, or beneath it, really. They are below the level of the ground. Yes, er— In the distance is the smokestack of the jute mill.

MISS BRADY

But they do escape sometimes?

SIMPKINS

Yes—er, sometimes. Not often. You will notice the towers on the wall. They contain machine guns, and searchlights which can flood the prison yard.

RINEWULF *comes in; crosses briskly to the alcove, looking neither to the right nor left*

MISS BRADY

Yes, but if they do escape?

SIMPKINS

Yes,—er—in that case— That pent-house on the roof contains a siren. If a prisoner escapes, it shrieks a warning to the countryside.

MISS BRADY

Oh!

RINEWULF

Sharply to the Warden's clerk

Bring me the card for two-three-four-nine-nine.

SIMPKINS *starts, and looks around*

SIMPKINS

Have you met the Warden's family, Doctor?

RINEWULF

I have not the pleasure.

SIMPKINS

Miss Brady, the Warden's sister.

RINEWULF *bows stiffly*

His daughter . . . Dr. Rinewulf is quite a celebrated character.

MISS BRADY

Oh yes, I've heard of the remarkable things that he has done!

Engagingly to RINEWULF

But I am surprised that you should hide your candle in a prison, Doctor.

RINEWULF

My patients keep their appointments, and they pay their bills. That is more than they do outside.

The CLERK *comes into the room, a record card in his hand*

Well?

CLERK

The name is Graham, Robert.

RINEWULF

For what?

CLERK

Manslaughter.

RINEWULF

How long?

CLERK

Ten years.

RINEWULF

His record?

CLERK

Jute mill. No punishments.

RINEWULF

Give it to me.

He takes the card from the CLERK'S *hand.* MACMANUS'S *boisterous voice outside. He comes into the room,* BRADY *and* GLEASON *following.* RINEWULF *slips the card into his pocket. His back stiffens.* MACMANUS'S *voice has that effect on him.* BRADY *goes back, and stands there, looking through the window.* SIMPKINS *will presently fade decently and sheepishly away*

MACMANUS

As he enters

—and the children all put to bed for the night. That's a load off your mind in a home or a prison. You know where they are, Mart, each and every one of them.

He laughs loudly

Well, well, Miss Brady, and how are you now?

He shakes her hand

And Mary, my dear.

He touches her cheek playfully with his finger

MISS BRADY

With lugubrious conviction

I shall never get accustomed to this, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

Humorously

Now, now, don't say that, Miss Brady! You have the finest stone house in the state to live in. The walls are eight feet thick. Think of that!

MISS BRADY *sighs and shakes her head*

And service! Henry Ford, with all his millions, has nothing like it. Your cook was first chef in a big hotel. Ten thousand dollars a year he got. Think of that!

MISS BRADY

Faintly

What did he do?

MACMANUS

Poisoned his wife, that's all.

MISS BRADY

Gasping

Great conscience!

MACMANUS

Your butler was the second steward on an ocean liner, and you've not to tip him a cent. He wouldn't take it. Your house-boy was porter on a Pullman car. He knows everything but how to make a bed! Your chauffeur was—was— What was he, Gleason?

GLEASON

An aviator in the war, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

Think of that! Pity we haven't a flying machine.

GLEASON

He's going out in a few days now.

MACMANUS

Well, that's too bad. You'll have to pick another chauffeur, Mart.

MISS BRADY

What did he do?

MACMANUS

Murder or manslaughter.

MISS BRADY

Oh!

MACMANUS

Now don't you worry about that! A thief is always a thief, but a murderer is a murderer only once. They're the safest people in the world! Am I right, Captain?

GLEASON

That's right, Mr. MacManus.

MACMANUS

Pick a murderer, Mart, and you'll have no trouble.

MISS BRADY

Shuddering

It's too—horrible.

MACMANUS

Nonsense!— Wait till you see the antique furniture we've got!

He glances at his watch

Come now, I'll show it you, myself—stuff that's been standing here for sixty years.

He leads the way

That's all. Gleason.— Come on, Mart.

GLEASON *goes out.* MISS BRADY *and* MARY *follow* MACMANUS

MISS BRADY

Sighing

Well, I don't know—

MARY

Pausing at the door

Father!

BRADY

Eh?— Oh, yes!

She goes out. He turns to follow her

RINEWULF

If you can spare a moment, Warden?

BRADY

Yeah—sure!

RINEWULF

I wish to speak with you about a prisoner.

BRADY

Yeah?

He sits down beside the desk

RINEWULF

A man in the jute mill, a boy in fact, who is—breaking down.

BRADY

Yeah?— How do you mean, Doctor?

RINEWULF

I mean—morale.

BRADY

Yeah?— Why?

RINEWULF

Why? . . . Who can tell? . . . Sometimes I think that sex starvation is the root of all of it, and sometimes—

A pause. Abruptly; eagerly

But I have seen this boy, his character, I mean,—only for an instant, it is true, but I have seen it, and—and—

He hesitates

BRADY

Yeah?

RINEWULF

I should like to try an experiment.

BRADY

What?

RINEWULF

A change of occupation and—environment.

He takes the card from his pocket, and hands it to BRADY

BRADY

Yeah?

He looks at the card

Graham—Robert Graham—hum—the name is familiar.

He reflects for a moment

But I don't place him.

He puts the card down on the desk

What do you want me to do, Doctor?

RINEWULF

I would like to have you see the boy yourself.

BRADY

Yeah?

He nods

All right.

RINEWULF

Thank you. Thank you very much. I will have him brought here. Thank you.

He goes out

MACMANUS *bustles in*

MACMANUS

A word with you, Mart, before I go.

He pulls a chair close to the desk, and seats himself

You won't mind a bit of advice from an old friend?

BRADY

No.

MACMANUS

I know there isn't much about crooks I could be telling you.

BRADY

No.

It is almost a sigh

MACMANUS

The greatest State's Attorney the old town ever had—the greatest number of convictions to your credit.

BRADY

Yeah.

He takes a cigar from a box on the desk and lights it

MACMANUS

You're a big man, Mart—much too big a man for this job. It's only a temporary thing, I know.

BRADY

I'm nearly sixty, Mac.

MACMANUS

Yeah?—Well, you'd ought to be governor of this state right now, by every law of God and man. You got a dirty deal, Mart; that's what you got.

BRADY

That's the way things break sometimes.... I'm not kicking.... You've got to play the cards the way they fall.

MACMANUS

You've got a big heart, Mart. You've been too square with every one.

BRADY

I've always played the game according to the rules.... I'll finish up that way.

MACMANUS

Well, Mart, I only want to say—

He hesitates

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

They've shelved you for a while. It won't be long. You'll be back in the ring. But—

He hesitates again

—Well, don't let anything go wrong in here. Don't let 'em get anything on you, Mart.

BRADY

Yeah.

He nods

MACMANUS

Brush a nettle with your hand—it stings like hell! Grip it firmly—you can pull it up! A prison is like that.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

These birds, you know—some of 'em look all right, and talk all right, but they can't think straight. They've got kinks in their brains.

BRADY

Yeah, I know.

MACMANUS

Don't let 'em kid you, Mart.

BRADY *nods*

It's tough. Sure it's tough. I've got a heart, myself—But, what are you going to do, Mart? . . .

BRADY

Yeah.

He moistens the wrapper of his cigar

MACMANUS

There's only one way you can run a prison—heels on their necks.

BRADY *nods*

Pay no attention to Rinewulf, Mart. He's a good doctor, but he's a nut—full of theories about this and that, —sex starvation, and God knows what!— Always wanting to experiment with something. Discount everything he says. He's just a bug.

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

Gleason is your best bet—level-headed, cold as ice; and he knows the game from A to Z. Eternal vigilance—that's the ticket. Don't let 'em pull no monkey tricks.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

A jail break or a killing, Mart—you know what that'd mean.

BRADY *nods*

The newspapers'd howl their heads off. They're laying for you, Mart, and waiting for a chance—and hoping that they get it!

BRADY

Yeah, I know.

MACMANUS

Glancing at his watch

Well, I've got to beat it, or I'll miss my train.

Both men stand up

Good-by, and good luck, Mart.

They shake hands

BRADY

Thanks, Mac.

MACMANUS

From the door

You've got a man to hang next Thursday. I'll be down again for that. We'll check up the parole list then. So long.

He plunges down the stairs

BRADY

So long.

He sighs; walks slowly to the window, and stares down into the yard

A few moments pass. GRAHAM *comes with slow and dragging footsteps into the room, and halts midway to the desk. His vacant eyes stare straight before him, his shoulders sag, his step is noiseless.* GLEASON *appears behind him in the door*

GLEASON

Number two-three-four-nine-nine, Warden.

BRADY

Yeah?

He starts and turns

GLEASON

Dr. Rinewulf said you wanted him brought here.

BRADY

Yeah, that's right.

He seems uncertain what to do or say, and then goes slowly to the desk, seats himself, picks up the card and turns it in his hands

Yeah— Yeah— Your name is Robert Graham?

A pause. The boy shifts his feet, but makes no answer

Did—did they ever call you Bob?

A pause

GLEASON

In an ugly voice

D'you hear the warden talking to you?

He takes a step forward. BRADY *checks him with a gesture*

RINEWULF *comes in and goes quickly to the desk*

BRADY

In a kindly, reassuring tone

Well, Bob, I don't know what you're here for. These cards don't tell much of a story, but—

He hesitates, turning the card in his hand

GLEASON

It's the Parker case, Mr. Brady.

BRADY

Parker?

GLEASON

Yes, sir—young Parker that was killed six years ago.

BRADY

Yeah?— Oh!

He starts and looks sharply at the boy. Memory floods back

Yeah— Oh, yeah! Yeah, I remember—now. Well, well. . . .

He stares at the card, and the furrows in his brow are deep

MARY *comes into the room, and pauses just inside the door. She is facing* GRAHAM *across the room, and she looks straight at him into the blankness*

of his eyes, curiously and unafraid. He starts, catches his breath, his body stiffens, his head comes up; and his drooping shoulders straighten up and back. RINEWULF *is missing nothing.* BRADY'S *eyes are on the card. A little, friendly smile touches the girl's lips*

MARY

We're having tea, father.

BRADY

Only now aware of her presence

Eh?— Tea?

He chuckles

Say, we're getting pretty stylish, aren't we, Mary?

She laughs

All right, run along— I'll be there in a minute.

She turns, and leaves the room. He looks back at the card

Change of occupation and environment. . . . Hum! . . .

The descending Wall interrupts his speech

THE CURTAIN FALLS

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Act Two, SCENE I. The Warden's Living Room

ACT TWO

SCENE I

The Warden's Living Room.

A gray, cheerless room, barred windows at the back, which look down into the prison yard; between them a gray, cold fireplace. On the mantel-shelf a black, onyx clock. On the left there are two doors, one leading to the corridor connecting with the Warden's office, the other, farther back, opens into the service quarters. There is a third door at the right, which leads to other rooms of the apartment.

At one side is a tea-table, with the remains of lunch; hair-cloth chairs about it; there is a hair-cloth sofa on the other side. The room is sparsely furnished, and the effect is bleak and somber.

MISS BRADY *is dozing in a chair behind the table.*

GALLOWAY, *a tall, stooped, raw-boned, powerful-looking man of middle age, wearing a white coat over his convict shirt, comes in noiselessly through the service door. He has a tea-tray in his hand. He advances to the table, stands there for a moment, then coughs discreetly to attract attention.*

MISS BRADY

Starting

What?— Oh!

Irritably

Oh, it's you!— I wish you wouldn't wake me up like that. It startles me. I really wish you wouldn't.

GALLOWAY

He may be smiling behind his vacant eyes

Sorry, madam.

MISS BRADY

You may take the things away.

GALLOWAY

Thank you.

He clears the table deftly, and goes quickly, softly out. MARY *comes in from the right. She has a suitcase in her hand. She puts it down beside the couch, and crosses to the table*

MISS BRADY

I don't like that man.

MARY

Smiling

He's a very good servant.

MISS BRADY

No matter. I don't like him. I don't like any of them. I'd rather do my own work in two rooms than to live in such a place as this.

MARY

Nonsense!

MISS BRADY

I can't abide them. You never hear them coming; you never see them coming. You look up, and there they are. Ugh!

She shivers

I'm sure we shall all be murdered in our beds some night.

MARY

You don't adapt yourself.

MISS BRADY

I don't adapt myself to living in a prison. Why should I?

Plaintively

And now you're going away and I shall be left here alone with them. I don't see how I can endure it. I simply don't.

MARY

It won't be for long.

MISS BRADY

Rising

Well, I hope not. Dear me, I can't imagine why I feel so drowsy!

She yawns and taps her lips

It must be something that I had for lunch. Are you packed?— Ready?

MARY

All but my hat.

MISS BRADY

Yes. . . . Well—

She sighs again

I want to write a note for you to take to Jenny.

She goes out

MARY *rises and crosses to the couch. In a moment* RINEWULF *comes in from the corridor*

RINEWULF

Excuse me.

MARY

Yes?— Oh, Dr. Rinewulf!— Come in.

RINEWULF

Your father tells me you are going away.

MARY

Just for a week or ten days.

RINEWULF

Yes?

He looks at her so keenly that she moves uneasily, and averts her eyes

You are not happy here, perhaps?

MARY

Oh, yes!

RINEWULF

You do not feel or see the aura of the prison?— A great fantastic cloud shape hovering above and pressing down, the concentrated reek of human misery.

MARY

No.

But she shivers in spite of herself

RINEWULF

Nor I.

He laughs

MARY

Won't you sit down?

RINEWULF

Thank you.

But he continues to stand

I came only to say good-by.

A pause

I am sorry that you are going, even for so short a time. The miracle you have performed in six short months—

MARY

Miracle?

RINEWULF

The reconstruction of a man.

MARY

I don't think I understand you.

RINEWULF

I mean the man who drives your father's car.

MARY

Oh!

She catches her breath very slightly, not slightly enough to avoid his notice

What have I to do with that?

RINEWULF

I don't know.

He shrugs his shoulders

A curious phenomenon. The raising of Lazarus from the dead was not more curious. It has been very interesting to me. The prison takes six years to break a man, and—and something mends him in six months.

MARY

And is he mended, do you think?

RINEWULF

Can you not see that in his eyes?

A pause

For my own records I have taken the trouble to investigate his history and—his crime.

He takes from his pocket a large envelope

It has taken some time to collect the data, but it is all here, now.

MARY

Yes?

RINEWULF

It was not a crime at all. It was an accident.

She catches her breath again

I thought perhaps you might care to see the file.

MARY

Yes— Yes, I would.

RINEWULF

Handing her the envelope

You will return it to me?

MARY

Yes.

RINEWULF

Your father was State's Attorney at the time. He can no doubt confirm or supplement the facts.

MARY

In quick defense

My father is a just man, a kind man,—the kindest man I've ever known. If you mean—

RINEWULF

Raising his hand

Nothing. You quite misunderstand me. The integrity of our criminal code was not violated in this case.

MARY

Doubtfully

Oh!

RINEWULF

You do not understand me at all, I think. I am a scientist. I am interested only in causes and—effects.

He holds out his hand; abruptly

Good-by; I wish you a pleasant journey.

MARY

Touching his hand

Thank you.

GRAHAM *comes in from the corridor. His step has the spring of youth in it, his shoulders are square, his head high. His hair is neatly combed, and there*

is a sparkle in his eye. His prison uniform is new and decently fitted. He stops abruptly at sight of the doctor

GRAHAM

Diffidently

I came to get the bag.

MARY

Yes— I must get my hat— Good-by, Doctor.

She nods to him, and goes out

RINEWULF *turns and stares at* GRAHAM *critically from head to foot*

RINEWULF

Well, how are you, eh?

GRAHAM

Uneasily

Very well.

RINEWULF

You eat and sleep?

GRAHAM

Yes.

RINEWULF

And dream?

GRAHAM

No.

RINEWULF

Humph!

He goes out

GALLOWAY *comes in softly, looks warily about, and crosses to* GRAHAM

GALLOWAY

How they coming, kid?

He speaks out of the corner of his mouth, and his eyes are keen and watchful

GRAHAM

All right, Ned.

GALLOWAY

Pretty soft now, eh?

GRAHAM

Better.

GALLOWAY

Yeah?— Don't let these bastards fool you, kid, just because you're sitting on a cushion now. They'd gaff you just that quick.

He snaps his finger

Your friends are still inside.

GRAHAM

Yes, I know that, Ned.

GALLOWAY

Yeah— Well don't forget.

GRAHAM

I won't.

GALLOWAY

Looking about cautiously, and lowering his voice

D'you know what they did with Fales and Trask and Grimes?

GRAHAM

No.

GALLOWAY

Solitary for eight months. That's what they got.

GRAHAM

God!

GALLOWAY

Somebody's got to pay for that.

GRAHAM

Yes.

GALLOWAY

Jim thinks a lot of you. That's why I'm tipping you to—watch your step.

GRAHAM

I don't know what you mean.

GALLOWAY

You don't?— You're pretty dumb.

A pause

Somebody'll get that God damn squealer.

GRAHAM

Runch?

GALLOWAY

Who else?— There aren't walls thick enough, nor guards enough to save his life.

GRAHAM

He didn't know what he was saying, Ned. They gave him coke, and then they held it out in front of him

until he screamed and begged. It took three men to hold him, Ned. I saw it my own self.

GALLOWAY

I know, I know; but that don't let him out. Tough luck for him, maybe, but what about Jim Fales?—No, no, he can't get by with that. He squealed, turned up his pals. He's got to pay for that.

GRAHAM

But—how?

GALLOWAY

How should I know? I'm only tipping you there's something in the wind, so watch your step, unless you want to get into a jam.

GRAHAM

I don't. I don't. But what? How?

GALLOWAY

Keep clear of him and—there.

He points to the corridor

GRAHAM

Yes. Yes, I will.

He takes a deep breath

Thanks, Ned.

GALLOWAY

Sharply

Pst—

He turns to the table, picks up the cloth, and begins to fold it

MARY *comes into the room.* GALLOWAY *pauses, in the act of leaving the room, to look from one to the other of them*

MARY

Will you put these in my bag?

She holds out two envelopes

GRAHAM

Eagerly

Yes.

There is such obvious, doglike worship and devotion in his eyes that she looks away. He takes the envelopes and drops to his knees beside the bag. Awkwardly, diffidently

Will— Will you be gone—long?

MARY

Only a few days.

GRAHAM

Oh!

MARY

Is there anything I can do for you?

GRAHAM

He thinks for a moment

No, thank you.

MARY

Any one you'd like to have me see?

GRAHAM

Simply

There isn't anybody now. My mother died three years ago.

MARY

Oh!— I didn't know.

GRAHAM

She used to come to see me every month until she died. It—it kept my courage up. Something to look forward to, you see. Afterwards I began to slip, I guess. It's awfully hard to make yourself believe that it's worth while—to try. And that's what you've got to do—or break.

MARY

Yes.

GRAHAM

They all think they've had a rotten deal. That's all you hear. Bad luck, tough breaks; that's all they talk about. It gets under your skin in time, and fills you up with bitterness and hate. That's all there is in here.

MARY

And are you—bitter?

GRAHAM

No, not now.

He shakes his head

I was. But I seem to see more clearly—now.

MARY

What?

GRAHAM

I don't think I can put it into words. But, well, you see

they've got laws in here just like they have outside. Somebody's got to pay. That's at the bottom of it all—and—well, I guess we've got to make the most of it. It may be wrong, but— I guess it's all there is.

MARY

Nodding gravely

I see.

GRAHAM

Most everybody's trying to do what seems to them, right. Inside and out, I mean. They just think differently, that's all.

MARY

Yes.

A pause

My father is trying to get you a parole.

GRAHAM

Yes, I know. It doesn't matter so much to me, now.

MARY

Why do you say that?

GRAHAM

I—I mean if you stay here.

MARY

You don't mean that.

GRAHAM

Doggedly

Yes— Yes, I do. It isn't like it was before at all. If I can see you every day—just see you! And when they

lock me up at night there's something to think about—to—to wait for till to-morrow— I—well—

A pause

MARY

What will you do when you are free again?

GRAHAM

I don't know. I've thought about it a lot, too.

Anxiously

Don't you think it will make a difference to people?

MARY

What?

GRAHAM

That I have been in prison.

MARY

It shouldn't.

GRAHAM

With simple eagerness

No, it shouldn't, should it? When a thing is paid for, that should end it, but—

He shakes his head

—they don't think that in here. They say it does. They say that's why so many who go out, come back.

A pause. He searches her face

Would—would it make a difference to you?

MARY

Evenly

I don't think so.

GRAHAM

A little breathlessly

Oh!

MISS BRADY *comes into the room. She has a bit of sewing in her hand*

MISS BRADY

Haven't you gone yet? Whatever are you thinking of? You'll miss the train, Mary.

MARY

I'm going now. Good-by.

And she hurries out into the corridor

GRAHAM *picks up the bag and follows her*

MISS BRADY

Communing with herself

Well, I don't know, I'm sure—

She sighs and sits down on the sofa. And she sews a stitch or two, then pauses to yawn and tap her lips as if quite overcome with drowsiness, then rubs her eyes and sews again

GALLOWAY'S *face appears in the doorway, and regards her steadily*

The Wall descends

END OF SCENE I

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SCENE II

The Warden's Office.

MACMANUS *is seated near the desk.* BRADY *is standing near the door, his hands on* MARY'S *shoulders. He is bidding her good-by.* GRAHAM *is at the door with the suitcase in his hand.*

BRADY

Good-by, sweetheart. Have a good time.

He kisses her

MARY

Good-by, father.

She goes out

BRADY

After you take Miss Mary to the train, you come back here, Bob.

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

He goes out

MACMANUS

Guess it's got under her skin a little, eh?

BRADY

Yeah, I guess so.

He sits down behind the desk

MACMANUS

'Tisn't much of a place for a young girl, and that's a fact.

BRADY

No.

MACMANUS

Well, you pull another stunt or two like you did on that Fales break, Mart, and they can't keep you here.

BRADY

Yeah?

He lights a fresh cigar

MACMANUS

The papers had to hand it to you for that. One of them said the other day, it was a crime wasting Mart Brady on a prison job.

BRADY

Yeah?

MACMANUS

There's been a lot of talk in town, I tell you. You picked the proper moment for it, Mart,—just when an election's coming on.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

What've you done with Runch?

BRADY

He's here.

MACMANUS

Here?

BRADY

In there.

He points to the alcove

I've got him in here as my clerk, and he can barely read and write. He sleeps in there. I have his food sent in. He never sets a foot outside.

MACMANUS

He's safe enough in here.

BRADY

Pondering

Yeah?

A pause

He's petrified, scared stiff. He's like a rabbit in a trap. It hurts to look at him.

A pause

He's gotten on my nerves. I can't sleep nights for thinking of him, Mac— I want to get him out of here— I do!

MACMANUS

A little puzzled by the vehemence of his manner

Sure, I know just how you feel. It would be bad for you to have a killing now. You want to keep your record clean.

BRADY

Passionately

Christ! It isn't only that—I—

His voice drops back to normal

Well, I'm responsible, that's all.

MACMANUS

I'm doing all I can, Mart. I'm trying to get him trans-

ferred up the state. Of course, they'd sooner not have him up there. It's only passing the buck, because they'll get him some time—somewhere.

BRADY

Yeah.

MACMANUS

It's just a lot of red tape to go through. I'll get him off your hands the minute that I can.

BRADY

Yeah, do that— Do!

MACMANUS

Uncomfortably

Don't let it get your goat, Mart. It's all in the game—this stuff.

BRADY

Irritably

I know, I know. I'm playing it. I've done my share. Now get him off my neck, that's all.

MACMANUS

Scribbling on a piece of paper

I'll get right after it.

BRADY

Calling

Runch!

RUNCH *slinks into the room*

Fetch me the file for two-three-four-nine-nine.

RUNCH

In a cringing voice

Yes, sir.

He goes back into the alcove

BRADY

Half to himself

It's tough—tough.

MACMANUS

What?

BRADY

That any man should come to look like that.

MACMANUS

Vaguely

Yeah— Oh, yeah!

RUNCH *returns with a file, puts it down on the desk, and goes out*

BRADY

Spreading out the papers on the desk

What are you doing about the parole for this kid?

MACMANUS

Glancing at the papers

Graham— Oh, yeah!— Well, it's gone through the regular channels, Mart. It has to go before the Board, you know. It takes some time. There's lots of red tape to go through.

BRADY

Holding himself in check with an effort

Yeah, yeah, I know all about that.

MACMANUS

We can't play favorites, Mart. We have to take 'em up the way they come.

BRADY

Impatiently

Yeah, yeah. But I want to get him out of here, that kid. He's been here nearly seven years for—

He hesitates. Half to himself

—for nothing.

MACMANUS

Startled

You sent him up yourself.

BRADY

Passionately

I did, God pity me!

He slams his fist down on the desk

And justly too, according to our criminal code. All right, he's done enough, and paid enough. I want to get him out.

MACMANUS

Puzzled and impressed

Yeah—well, I'll try to rush it through.

He scribbles hastily

Was there anything else, Mart?

BRADY

No.

MACMANUS

Folding his memorandum, and putting it in his pocket

Well, I'll be getting back to town, I guess.

He stands up

It's pleasant weather we've been having, Mart.

BRADY

Absently

Yeah.

A pause

MACMANUS

Cautiously

You mustn't let these bastards get your goat.

BRADY

Don't worry about me. I've always played the game according to the rules. I'll finish up that way.

MACMANUS

Sure, you will. That's right— Well, so long, Mart.

BRADY

So long.

MACMANUS *goes out.* BRADY *picks up the papers slowly, and returns them to the file, calling*

Runch!

RUNCH *appears and comes up to the desk*

Put these away.

RUNCH

Yes, sir.

He turns to go

BRADY

Harshly

Why are you trembling like that?

RUNCH

I—I don't know.

BRADY

Pull yourself together, man. There's eight feet of stone wall between you and the yard, and iron gates down there with guards on either side.

RUNCH

There's all the clerks in the turnkey's office, sir.

BRADY

Do you think it likely they'll walk past the guards and climb my private stairs?

RUNCH

No, sir.

BRADY

There's no one beyond there, except my servants. Do you think they'd risk the easy jobs they've got, to say nothing of their necks, for you?

RUNCH

No, sir.

BRADY

And the kid that drives my car—you're not afraid of him?

RUNCH

No, sir.

BRADY

Then pull yourself together. No one can harm you here.

RUNCH

Whining

They'll get me, sir. They'll get me. I know they will.

BRADY

In God's name, how?

RUNCH

I don't know that. I wish I did. Oh, can't you get me out of here?

BRADY

I'm doing what I can.

RUNCH

I never meant to squeal. I couldn't help myself. I didn't know what I was saying. You framed me, so you did. You'd ought to get me out of here. You promised that you would.

BRADY

I'm doing what I can, I tell you.

RUNCH

Desperately

A guy that squeals had ought to have a break—a chance to save his life—a run for it. It's like the death house —waiting here!

BRADY

You're off your nut.

RUNCH

You'd ought to get me out of here. I'd beat it down

for South America. I'd never come back here again. I swear to God I wouldn't, Warden— For Christ's sake, give me a chance—a break.

GRAHAM *comes into the room*

BRADY

That's all, Runch. You can go.

RUNCH *slinks away*

GRAHAM

You told me to come back here, sir.

BRADY

Yeah. I want to talk to you. Sit down.

GRAHAM *sits down near the desk. Far off a droning sound begins, so faint at first that one is almost unaware of it. It has the quality of swarming bees, and of the surf. There is a rhythm in it, and a beat, and it will mount by almost imperceptible degrees into a roar*

BRADY

I'm trying to get you out of here.

GRAHAM

Yes, sir. I know.

BRADY

It isn't as easy as it sounds. Prisoners think the warden is God, but there's a lot of gods stuck over him, and rules and laws. The system's like a big machine: you go in one end and come out the other. See?

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

BRADY

It has to be like that, I guess— It has to be.

A pause

There's four thousand men in here, Bob, and every one of them wants me to do something.

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

BRADY

You've done six years out of your ten. Your record's clean. You're eligible for parole. I'm doing what I can to get you out.

GRAHAM

Yes, sir.

BRADY

You're pretty bitter, maybe. I don't know.

GRAHAM

No, sir—not now.

BRADY

So much the better for you. Most prisoners are, and then the fight goes on forever. You've only paid according to the law. That's all. A State's Attorney has to fight like hell for that. For every man he puts behind the bars, a dozen slip between his fingers. He has to fight a dirty yellow press, and maudlin public sentiment, and shyster lawyers that'll stoop to anything for money, and juries of sentimental women and plain morons. That's all part of the game. And—

He breaks off abruptly; listening. The distant roar rises and surges. It has now the semblance of a chant, a jeering college yell

THE ROAR

Yah, yah, yah— Yah, yah, yah— Yah, yah, yah— Yah, yah, yah.

It goes on, rising and falling, and gaining volume

BRADY

What's that?

He gets up and strides to the window

GRAHAM

At his side

I think it's in the recreation yard behind the jute mill, sir.

BRADY

Yeah.

GRAHAM

A fight, perhaps.

BRADY

Yeah.

He strides to the door

Wait here till I come back.

And he goes out

GRAHAM *remains standing by the window, looking out. In a moment* RUNCH *comes into the room. He is shaking with terror*

RUNCH

Christ! What's that noise?

GRAHAM *starts, turns, moves back a little*
What is it, Bob?

GRAHAM
I don't know— A fight, maybe.

RUNCH
A fight? A fight?
He shuffles to the window
Why would they yell like that?

GRAHAM
I don't know.
He draws farther back. The sound subsides a little

RUNCH
Furiously
You think the touch of me'd foul you, eh?— God damn you, you're sitting pretty now. You may be in a jam like this yourself, some day. I'm just as square a guy as you—as any one. They framed me, and I fell for it —that's all. I got a rotten break—a rotten break.
The noise swells up
Christ! They're starting in again— What is it— What?
He presses his face against the window
The guards are running back there, every one!... I can see the machine guns on the wall.... They got 'em trained that way. Maybe it's a riot, eh?

GRAHAM
I don't know.

RUNCH
Whining

I've always been a friend of yours, Bob. Remember when we lived up in the block, you and Jim Fales, and me next door? And we messed together, too—the three of us, eh, Bob?

GRAHAM

Yes.

RUNCH

I never done you any dirt. You ain't got anything against me, Bob?

GRAHAM

Hesitating

No.

RUNCH

Pleading

Give me a tipoff, kid. Have they got me framed?—Are they going to get me— Eh?

GRAHAM

I don't know.

RUNCH

Furiously

The hell you don't! You're down there in the yard. You know what's going on. You're holding out on me. Why don't you show your eyes, and look me in the face?

Whining again, and clasping his hands in supplication

Have a heart, kid!— Have a heart!— Give me a chance—a break—

The noise swells up again

God!— God!

He turns to the window, and turns back

Go find out what they're yelling for!

GRAHAM

I can't— He told me to stay here.

RUNCH

You're lying to me.

GRAHAM *shakes his head*

Just down the stairs, and ask the guards down there.

GRAHAM

No.

RUNCH

By God!— I think you're in on it, yourself.

GRAHAM

No—I don't know anything, I tell you.

RUNCH

Pleading again

Then go out there, and listen in the hall. You might hear something, Bob. I only want to know what's up. I can't stand waiting here like this— Please, Bob— please.

The sound is louder. He can scarce be heard. He goes toward GRAHAM, *who backs from him toward the door*

I'd do the like for you. I'd do it for a dog.

And now his voice is drowned. The roar submerges everything. He seizes GRAHAM *by the arm,*

and GRAHAM *pulls away from him, and bows his head, and goes out into the hall*

RUNCH *turns back, cursing and mumbling to himself. He covers his ears with his hands, and shuffles to the window and looks out.* GALLOWAY *appears at the entrance to the corridor; in his hand is the haft of a knife, the blade of which is in his sleeve. He stands there for a moment; then, as if impelled by some psychic power,* RUNCH *turns deliberately and stares straight into his face. A pause. Suddenly, with a little squeal like a frightened animal, he breaks for the stairs; but* GALLOWAY *is swifter of foot, and blocks him at the door. He stops and cowers back, looks desperately about, then squeals again, and darts into the alcove.* GALLOWAY *follows him; some moments pass; the roar begins to fade*

GRAHAM *comes back. He pauses for a moment at the door, listening. The sound is fading rapidly. He turns and looks for* RUNCH, *then starts across the room toward the alcove. As he does so,* GALLOWAY *comes out*

GRAHAM

Stammering

Galloway?— You?—

GALLOWAY

Stuttering hoarsely

You God damn, meddling fool— I told you to stay out of here. I wasted breath to warn you.

GRAHAM

I couldn't go. The warden—

GALLOWAY

To hell with that! I ought to cut your throat, to make it safe. You may be planted here, for all I know.

GRAHAM

Shrinking back

No— No!

GALLOWAY

Hold up your head then. Let me see your face. Look me in the eye and tell me that—

He goes up close to him

Quick!— Quick! I say!

GRAHAM *straightens with an effort. For a long moment they stare into each other's eyes*

Yes— Yes—

He backs slowly toward the corridor

GRAHAM

Faltering

What is it, Ned?— What have you done—to him?

GALLOWAY

Frantically

Beat it, you fool! Get out! Don't let them find you here, you sap—you dumbbell. Go on! Go on! Get out!

He turns and darts into the corridor. The noise

has faded out to nothing. GRAHAM *stands for a moment in the center of the room, inert and dazed; then runs to the alcove door; looks in, gasps and staggers back*

God— God!

He takes a few steps toward the corridor; BRADY *comes in with* GLEASON *at his heels*

BRADY

As he enters

Yeah— Come on in, Gleason. Sit down.

He turns to GRAHAM *as if he had forgotten his existence*

Yeah— Oh, yeah!— I'll not be going out again to-day, Bob. You can put the car away.

GRAHAM

Faintly

Yes, sir.

BRADY

Eh?

He looks at him sharply now

What's wrong with you?

GRAHAM

With a great effort to control himself

Nothing—sir.

BRADY

Are you sick, or what?

GRAHAM

No, sir. I . . .

He bows his head, and shifts his feet

BRADY

Yeah?

A pause

All right, you can go.

GRAHAM *goes out.* BRADY *sits down heavily behind the desk*

Have a cigar?

GLEASON

Thanks, Warden.

He takes one from the box

BRADY

What do you make of it?

GLEASON

Well, sir, it's hard to tell. There was no fight, or anything like that.

BRADY

Lighting a cigar

No.

GLEASON

I couldn't even find out where it started from.

BRADY

Yeah.

GLEASON

They get it going once—it spreads through all of 'em.

BRADY

It's not a pretty sound.

GLEASON

No, sir, it's not. It drives the guards near wild, sometimes. I've known them keep it up all night, to kick about the grub.

BRADY

Yeah?

GLEASON

Yes, sir, that's right. But what can you do when there's four thousand of 'em?

BRADY

Nothing—I guess.

He sighs

GLEASON

Sometimes it's just pure orneriness, and then again, they'll pull a stunt like that to cover something else.

BRADY

Starting slightly

Yeah?

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He lights his cigar

BRADY

Grimly; half to himself

I thought of that . . . I thought of that, myself.

A pause. He calls with a little note of tenseness in his voice

Runch!

A pause. He swings around in his swivel chair, and stares for a moment at the alcove; then gets up quickly, and strides to the door

Gleason!— Come here!

GLEASON

Hurrying to the door

By God, they got him!

BRADY

Yeah.

GLEASON

Now who'd have thought they'd risk to come in here?

He shakes his head stupidly

BRADY

See if he's dead.

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He goes into the alcove

BRADY

Striding back to the desk, and picking up the phone

Warden talking. Find Rinewulf and send him up here quick. . . . Yeah. Wait— And send the chaplain too— Yeah.

He hangs up the receiver, and remains standing by the desk, chewing his cigar

GLEASON

At the door

He isn't dead; but I think he's nearly gone.

BRADY

I've sent for Rinewulf.

GLEASON

It must have been your driver, sir—young Graham, that's turned the trick.

BRADY

You're crazy, Gleason—crazy!

GLEASON

He acted mighty queer when we came in.

BRADY

Why would he? Why would he? What was this to him?

GLEASON

You never can tell what's working in their heads.

BRADY

No matter now. Don't waste time talking here. See if you can't get something out of him.

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He goes back into the alcove

BRADY

Picking up the phone

Send up the two guards on the gate— Yeah, both of them. Wait— Find my driver, Graham, and tell him to come back up here— Yeah.

He hangs up the receiver

GLEASON'S VOICE

Who did it, Runch?— Who did it, eh?— Come clean, now— Can't you hold your head up, eh?— You don't

want to go with a thing like this on your conscience, Runch. You want to see that justice is done. Who did it, eh?— Speak now, come on! You can. I know you can— Runch!— Runch!

RINEWULF *comes into the room, his surgical kit-bag in his hand*

BRADY

Nodding to the alcove

In there, Doctor.

RINEWULF *hurries into the alcove. In a moment* GLEASON *comes out*

GLEASON

Irritably

He could tell, if he would. He had the strength to ask me for a shot. They're all alike, these crooks. They never tell you nothing.

BRADY

Yeah.

He is thinking hard

Go into my apartment. Find my sister. Find out where she's been the last half hour, exactly where, and just what she's been doing. Understand?

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He hurries into the corridor

BRADY *remains, standing by the desk. Two guards come in from the hall; one of middle-age,* KURTZ; *the other, a young man,* STOLPER. *Both are stalwart*

and broad-shouldered, with dull, stupid faces. And both are frightened at this summons to the Warden's office

BRADY

Come in!

They come up to the desk

What are your names?

KURTZ

Kurtz, sir.

STOLPER

Stolper.

BRADY

Which one of you is on the inside gate?

KURTZ

Me, sir.

BRADY

Have you been away from it, the last half hour?

KURTZ

No, sir.

BRADY

Think carefully now— Not for a minute, eh?— Not a step?

KURTZ

No, sir. You can ask Stolper, there.

STOLPER

That's right.

BRADY

And where were you?

STOLPER

I was right there.

BRADY

Right where?

STOLPER

At the gate.

BRADY

Which gate?

STOLPER

Stammering

The—the outer gate.

BRADY

Yeah?

A pause

You didn't leave your gate and cross the vestibule to him?

He points to KURTZ

Take care!

STOLPER

Gulping

Yes, I did.

BRADY

Yeah— For what?

STOLPER

When there was all that racket, I just went over there to look into the yard. And we were talking, Kurtz and me, about it. Kurtz can tell you that.

KURTZ

Yes, sir.

STOLPER

Both gates were locked. I didn't think no harm of it. It's just a step. There's nothing in between.

BRADY

What about the door of the turnkey's office?

STOLPER

I—I didn't think of that.

BRADY

A man could have come out that door, come up my private stairs—you'd not have seen him, eh?

KURTZ

It isn't likely, sir.

BRADY

That isn't what I'm asking you. Could it have happened?

They shift their feet, and bow their heads

Yeah— Yeah— Did you see any one come up?

They shake their heads

Did you see any one come down?

KURTZ

No, sir.

BRADY

That's all.

They file out of the room dejectedly. GLEASON *returns*

Well?

GLEASON

She's in the living room, at the end of the corridor. She's been there even since your daughter left, she says.

BRADY

What was she doing?

GLEASON

She was asleep. I had to wake her up.

BRADY

You mean to say she slept through all that howling?

GLEASON

Yes. She said she felt so drowsy after lunch, she couldn't hold her eyes open. I didn't mention it to her, but—

He hesitates

—well, it must have been a drug.

BRADY

Yeah.

A pause. Half to himself

By God!—they even thought of that.

GLEASON

They're mighty sharp, these birds.

BRADY

The man who turned this trick came from there—or there.

He points to the corridor and to the hall

Both ways were open, both prepared, each one to alibi the other.

GLEASON

Graham—

BRADY

Impatiently

Use your nut. Why plant these alibis and then leave some one to be caught red-handed? He blundered into it, the boy—just blundered into it.

GLEASON

Well, anyway, he knows who done it.

BRADY

Slowly; with an expression of pain in his eyes

Yeah, I guess that's right, Gleason— I guess he does.

GLEASON

Pondering

It wouldn't be the cook. I'd swear to that. . . . The nigger porter's just a boob. . . . It might be Galloway.

BRADY

Or any one of half a dozen in the turnkey's office.

GLEASON

Yes, sir, that's right.

BRADY

Go check them up for bloodstains quick, before they have a chance to get them off.

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He dashes out into the hall, just as SIMPKINS *strolls in*

SIMPKINS

You sent for me, Warden?

BRADY

Yeah.

SIMPKINS

I hope I haven't kept you waiting. I was repairing my radio.

BRADY

Dryly

Yeah?— It's all right with me, Simpkins. . . . But there's a man in there who may not have much time.

He points to the alcove

SIMPKINS

Startled

Dear me! I didn't know.

He starts to cross the room. As he does so, RINEWULF *comes out*

BRADY

Well?

RINEWULF

He is dead.

SIMPKINS

What!— A man is dead?

RINEWULF

Examining the point of his hypodermic

He wanted the consolation of the church. Unfortunately I could not give it to him. I did what I could. I kept his heart beating as long as possible.

SIMPKINS

Chut! Chut!— I'm really fearfully sorry.

BRADY

Did he make any statement?

RINEWULF

Nothing.

BRADY

Well, I guess that's all, Simpkins.

SIMPKINS

Yes—well—I—I'm sorry. I didn't know, you see— It's really too bad. . . . Hum . . .

He wanders to the door and out of it

RINEWULF

It is always amazing to me, Warden, the value which society attaches to a human life.

GLEASON *returns*

GLEASON

They're going through 'em with a fine tooth comb. I'll have a look at Galloway, myself.

He goes out through the corridor

RINEWULF

Snapping shut his bag

I'll send a stretcher for him later.

BRADY

Deep in thought

Yeah.

RINEWULF

I wish to make a death-mask for my collection.

He goes out

A moment later GRAHAM *comes in. His face is white and frightened*

GRAHAM

Tremulously

You sent for me?

BRADY

Starting

Yeah?

He turns and looks at the boy soberly, almost sadly

Come in, Bob.

GRAHAM *stands near the desk*

Bob—you didn't do that, did you?

And he nods toward the alcove

GRAHAM

No, sir.

BRADY

Sighing with relief

Yeah.

A pause

I didn't think you did. It's—it's just a happenstance—the way things break, sometimes.

A pause

It was a skillful, crafty trick. They cleared the way to both those doors. They knew the racket in the yard would draw that saphead off the outer gate. They

figured that. They thought of everything, except that some one like yourself might blunder into it.

GRAHAM

Listlessly

I couldn't go. You told me to stay here.

BRADY

Wearily

Yeah, that's right— I did.

A pause

Who killed him, Bob?

GRAHAM *looks down at the floor, and shifts his feet*

Who killed him?

GRAHAM

I—I don't know.

BRADY

Yeah?

A pause

I'm afraid you can't get away with that, my boy. I go out of this room, and leave you here, and Runch is alive. When I come back, you're still here, white as chalk, and Runch is dead or dying— You knew that, didn't you?

GRAHAM

Almost inaudibly

Yes.

BRADY

Yeah. And you were in here when the man was killed.

GRAHAM

Desperately

No, no, I wasn't here.

BRADY

What?

GRAHAM

I wasn't here. I went—

He hesitates, seeing the trap into which he is about to fall

BRADY

Went where?

GRAHAM

Stammering

Nowhere.

BRADY

What do you mean?

GRAHAM

Nothing— I—

He takes a deep breath

Nothing.

BRADY

And yet you say you don't know who did that. You're lying, Bob—lying to shield a murderer, a man who crept in here with a knife and struck that poor, defenseless creature down.

A pause

Is that worth while?

No answer

A man is dead in there, Bob. The law says some one has to pay for that.

GRAHAM

Doggedly

I didn't kill him.

BRADY

I know that, Bob.

GRAHAM

I didn't even know. I wasn't even in on it. I'll swear to that.

BRADY

Soothingly

Yeah, yeah, sure, Bob, I understand. But there'll be an inquest.

GRAHAM

Startled

An inquest?

BRADY

Yeah, that's right. The long arm of the law will reach right through these gates—the same law that's outside. You didn't think of that?

GRAHAM

No, sir.

BRADY

What will you say to the coroner's jury then?

GRAHAM

Taking a deep breath

Nothing.

A pause

BRADY

You can't get away with that. They'll yank you out of here and put you in the county jail. I've got no jurisdiction then, no more than you or any one. I'm just a witness in the dock. What can I say? They'll hold you as an accessory before the fact, or after it, or God knows what. You might get ten or twenty years for that.

GRAHAM

No!

He staggers

BRADY

Rising quickly to his feet

Sit down, my boy—sit down.

He takes his arm, and GRAHAM *sinks down in a chair*

I've got to tell you this. You've got to know— A free man has nine chances out of ten to cheat the law. A prisoner hasn't one chance in a hundred. Opinion is against him from the start.

A pause. He sits on the edge of the desk chewing his cigar

They could indict you for this, Bob. Men have been hung on slimmer evidence.

GRAHAM

No— No!

BRADY

Yeah, that's right.

He picks up the code from the desk, turns to a page, and reads:

"... except that a prisoner serving a sentence for homicide, who shall be convicted of murder, shall be hanged...."

He closes the book, and puts it down

That's our criminal code, Bob.

GRAHAM

It isn't fair. It isn't just.

BRADY

It's the law— That's all we've got—

A pause

I doubt if they'd convict you, Bob, but—you can never tell which way those things will jump. The State's Attorney here is a young man. He's out to make a record for himself. The papers will be at his back. They'll leave no stone unturned to punish somebody for that.

A pause

It's tough—tough—but you see the way things lie. You'd better tell me, Bob.

GRAHAM

I can't do that— I can't do that.

He shakes his head

There's law inside here, too. A man can do anything

but squeal. He can't do that— I'll have to take my chance, I guess.

BRADY

Chance! You've got no chance. You're in a net. You're caught. You've got to clear this up to save yourself.

GRAHAM

I can't.

BRADY

You must— Good God, boy, stop and think! You may get ten or twenty years.

GRAHAM

No, no, I'd rather die than that. I couldn't stand it. No.

BRADY

Your parole's up in town. It's due here any day. The prison board will cancel that.

GRAHAM

I didn't kill him. I have done nothing wrong.

BRADY

The time you've earned for good behavior will be lost. That leaves you three more years to serve— three years at least.

GRAHAM

It isn't right. It isn't fair.

BRADY

And I can't keep you here with me. They'd never stand for that. You'd go back in the jute mill, Bob.

GRAHAM

Wildly

No, no, I can't. I won't.

BRADY

You've not forgotten the smell of jute in six short months?

GRAHAM

God!— No.

BRADY

You see, you're up against it, boy. You've got to tell.

Suddenly he slams his fist down on the desk, and shouts

Who killed that man? Who killed him, Bob? Come clean now! Quick! Speak up! Who killed him? Who? Who?

A pause

Yeah?

Gently, pleadingly

Just tell me where he came from, Bob— From there?— or there?

He indicates the corridor and hall

You can't be doing any harm by that. I know it was one way or the other. It's just a detail that I'd like to know— From there, eh, Bob?

No answer

Or over there?—

No answer

Come now, be reasonable. It won't be violating your code to tell me that— Bob!

GRAHAM

Stolidly

I don't know.

BRADY

Yeah.

He sits down on the desk again, beside the boy

Do you believe that I'm your friend, and that I want to help you?

GRAHAM

I don't know.

BRADY

Passionately

Well, I am. I swear to God I am. I haven't got another thought in this but you, and I've got lots to lose myself. I was the warden of that man. His safety was my job. His blood is on my head. The yellow press will make me sweat for this, and—there's an election coming on. I'm not thinking of that— Understand?

GRAHAM

Yes.

BRADY

Things have been tough for you. It was a rotten piece of luck that sent you here. You've had another now. God knows why! It's just the way things break sometimes for me or you or any one. You have to play the cards the way they fall. See what I mean?

GRAHAM

Yes.

BRADY

Yeah— Well, you're up against it, boy. You're up against the wall. By God, that's true! You're up against it stark and flat. There's only one way out for you.

A pause

Come, get it off your chest— Who killed that man?

A pause

You won't come through?

GRAHAM

I can't.

BRADY

You'll trade your life away to live up to a code that's made by murderers and crooks to cheat the laws of honest men? You're not a crook. That's not your code.

GRAHAM

It's all I've had.

BRADY

Snatching the book up from the desk

No. This is your code and mine. Hold fast to it. You can't be faithful to them both. Stick with the law. You're not a crook. Don't turn one now. Don't turn your back on this.

He slams the book down on the desk

Who killed that man?

GRAHAM

No.

He shakes his head, and stumbles on

I— I can't forget so quickly what I've learned in here—

I can't do that. I think it's right, their code, for them— I can't go back on it—or them. I can't— I wouldn't be anything then, don't you see?— Not anything—I— I'd be like that thing in there— No! No!

BRADY

Helplessly

Yeah?

GLEASON *comes in from the corridor*

Well?

GLEASON *shakes his head, and he looks at* GRAHAM *with a frowning brow*

GLEASON

What does *he* say, Warden?

BRADY

Nothing.

GLEASON

Incredulously

You mean he won't tell?

BRADY

Yeah.

GLEASON

Starting across the floor

By God, we'll take that out of him!

BRADY

Wait!

He faces the boy across the desk. His voice is loud; his manner threatening

I'll give you one more chance. I'll have your parole

here next week. You'll be outside these walls—free, do you understand? Free to go and come wherever you damn please. Free to make a future for yourself, to have a home and wife and kids. Free, do you understand?

GRAHAM

Yes.

BRADY

Yeah— Or rot here in this cage for three or ten or twenty years, a rope around your neck, perhaps. The jute mill every day, day in day out, week in week out, year in year out. Jute! Jute! The smell of it that turns you sick.

GRAHAM *shrinks and cowers back*

The dungeon now. A bucket meal each seven days—cold slop. And bread and water in between. No ray of light, no air, no sound, no human voice. Black emptiness, that's all.

GRAHAM

Rising to his feet and backing away

God, no!— For what?— For what?

BRADY

The prison rules. A prisoner must obey. Come now!

He follows the boy, and grips him by the shoulders

Who killed that man?—Who killed that man? Think fast, Bob! For God's sake, think fast!—Who killed him?—Eh?

The boy cowers back. His eyes are suddenly expressionless

Yeah?

He stares at the blank eyes for a long moment, and a baffled, tired look comes into his face. His shoulders droop, and he turns away. To GLEASON; *harshly*

Take him away!—Put him in the dungeon!—Lock him up!

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He raps with his cane on the floor

Come now, get out!—On your way!

GRAHAM *turns and goes slowly from the room, with dragging step, his shoulders bent, his body sagging,* GLEASON *following him*

He'll not be so cocky in a week.

BRADY

Wait!—No violence to that boy!—Let no one lay a hand on him!—You understand?

GLEASON

Doubtfully

Yes, sir.

BRADY

I'm doing this for him—for him. I've got to save him, do you see? To save him from himself— He's got to tell. He must. He must.

He strikes the desk with his fist

GLEASON

Vaguely impressed

Yes, sir—he will. A week of bread and water in the dark'll loosen up his tongue.

BRADY

You think so, eh?

GLEASON

It mostly always does.

BRADY

Yeah— Yeah.

A pause; abruptly; savagely

Get the Bertillon man! Fingerprint everything up here —the hall, the stairs, the corridor, the body there! Don't miss a bet— you understand? I've got to get that bird. I've got to get him!

GLEASON

Yes, sir.

He starts to go

BRADY

Wait!—Send Galloway in here—the cook, the nigger, too; and all that gang down there. I want 'em all. By God, I'll grill it out of them. I'll get the bird that turned this trick. I'll get him.

GLEASON

Yes, sir. Is that all?

BRADY

Yes. Go. Be quick. Put everybody on this job. Don't miss a bet, you understand?—Don't miss a bet!

GLEASON

No, sir.

And he dashes from the room

BRADY

Sinking down in the chair beside his desk; wildly, to himself

A week of bread and water in the dark— A week of bread and water in the dark! . . . The dark! The dark! . . . Christ!

Then, steadying himself, he snatches up the telephone

Warden talking— Get me the coroner— Yeah . . .

The descending Wall interrupts his speech

THE CURTAIN FALLS

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE I

The Living Room.
It is late afternoon.

MISS BRADY *is seated on the sofa; she has a shawl about her shoulders; and an air of mild invalidism.* DR. RINEWULF *is seated on a chair, facing her; his medical satchel on his knees.*

RINEWULF

Well, how are you feeling to-day, eh?

MISS BRADY

Plaintively

I am sorry to say, no better, Doctor.

RINEWULF

Humph!

He studies her for a moment

Your niece—when will she return?

MISS BRADY

This afternoon—at any moment now.

RINEWULF

Good! That will be a comfort to you.

MISS BRADY

Oh, yes!

She sighs

I simply cannot sleep, Doctor. And when I do doze off, I'm sure to be roused by some fearful nightmare—faces hovering over me—and hands, with knives. It brings on palpitations of my heart. No one can have a notion what I suffer.

RINEWULF

Humph!

MISS BRADY

I haven't had a night's rest for a week—not since it happened, Doctor.

RINEWULF

I think the prison atmosphere does not agree with you.

MISS BRADY

I'm sure of it. My health is being undermined. My nervous system shattered.

RINEWULF

Humph—

He opens his satchel, and considers the contents thoughtfully

MISS BRADY

A dozen times in the past week I have been on the point of saying to my broher that I would have to leave, but —well!

She sighs

I talked it over with Mr. Simpkins, and we thought it would be wrong to add to his anxieties just now.

RINEWULF

Hum . . .

He selects a bottle, and transfers a tablet from it to an empty vial

MISS BRADY

My poor brother!

She sighs

Of course you've seen the papers, Doctor?

RINEWULF

I have no time to read the papers.

MISS BRADY

They're so unfair and abusive. As if he hadn't done enough through all these years to serve his country and his state, and to enforce the laws—an upright, honest man. It's politics—just politics.

RINEWULF

No doubt.

He puts away the bottle, and snaps the satchel shut

MISS BRADY

As if he could be responsible for murder in a place like this. It's just a miracle to me we haven't all been murdered in our beds. They even dare to hint that he knows more about it than he's told. I think it's just too shameful—shameful!

RINEWULF

Holding out the vial

Please take this pill before retiring.

MISS BRADY

She holds it doubtfully between thumb and finger

What is it, Doctor?

RINEWULF

Luminal. It will not hurt you.

MISS BRADY

Vaguely

Oh!— Oh, yes! Since I was drugged, I am afraid of everything.

RINEWULF

Rising

You will sleep better now, to-night.

MISS BRADY

I hope so, Doctor.

She crosses to the door

RINEWULF

You must not let the prison get upon your nerves. You are apart from it. These men have no concern with you. They will not harm you—no. Their quarrel is with the law. They are like animals. Like—

He hesitates

—like rattlesnakes.

MISS BRADY

Gasping

Rattlesnakes? Oh, Doctor!

RINEWULF

They will not strike unless you interfere with them.

She opens the door. He bows

Good afternoon.

He smiles to himself; shrugs, and starts to cross the room

MARY *comes in from the corridor. At her heels, carrying her bag, is* JERRY, *a boyish-looking convict. He stands, waiting her orders, just inside the door*

Ah! Good day, good day!

He bows

MARY

How do you do, Doctor?

RINEWULF

I have missed you. The prison has not been the same without you.

She stares at him, seeking some hidden meaning in his words

I am glad you have returned—very glad indeed.

MARY

Yes?

She turns to JERRY

You may put my bag down there— That's all.

She does not take her eyes from him until he has left the room; then she turns back to RINEWULF

What do you mean?

RINEWULF

Pointedly

Some things have happened in your absence.

MARY

What?

RINEWULF

No doubt you have read the papers.

MARY

Papers? Yes. . . . They don't mean anything to me. My father has been crucified so many times for this and that and anything. It's politics—just dirty politics.

RINEWULF

No doubt—pardon me.

He crosses toward the door, hesitates, and turns

Oh, yes! The memoranda which I loaned you when you left— Do you remember?

MARY

Yes.

RINEWULF

You have found it interesting?

MARY

Taking a deep breath

Yes.

RINEWULF

Smiling

I thought you would.

He turns again

MARY

Why did that strange man meet me at the train?

RINEWULF

Strange man?

MARY

You saw him. He came in with my bag.

RINEWULF

Oh, yes.

He nods

MARY

Where is the boy who drove our car?

RINEWULF

Graham—?

He hesitates

Perhaps it would be best for you to ask your father that.

MARY

My father is busy in the office with some man. I could not stop to question him.

RINEWULF

Well, in that case, your aunt is in her room. I am sure she will enjoy informing you of everything.

MARY

Staring at him

Yes?

RINEWULF

Good day— So nice to have you back.

He bows and leaves the room

MARY *hesitates for a moment in the center of the room, then turns abruptly and goes briskly out at the right.*

GALLOWAY *comes in from the service door, and looks cautiously about. He notes the time from the*

clock on the mantel-shelf. A moment later JERRY *comes into the room from the corridor.*

GALLOWAY

Going quickly down to meet him

You're late.

JERRY

I know. I couldn't help it. The girl just came in on the train. I had to bring her up. I've only got a minute.

GALLOWAY

That's time enough. Now listen to me, closely. When you go back to the garage, go past the cookhouse—see?

JERRY

Nervously

No. What for?

GALLOWAY

It's on your way, you sap.

JERRY

Yeah, but—

GALLOWAY

For Christ's sake close your trap, and listen to me. You're walking past the cookhouse—see? You've got that, have you?

JERRY

Yeah.

GALLOWAY

And time yourself so you'll go by at just three minutes after four.

JERRY

Doubtfully
Well, if I can—

GALLOWAY

Three minutes after four, exactly!

JERRY

Yeah— What then?

GALLOWAY

You'll meet Joe MacNamee right there, you see? He'll just be going in the door.

JERRY

Stupidly
Joe MacNamee?

GALLOWAY

My God!— You know him, don't you?

JERRY

Yeah, but—

GALLOWAY

Shut up, and listen then. You stop and speak to him, you understand?

JERRY

Yeah.

GALLOWAY

And slip him this.
He draws a knife out of his sleeve

JERRY

Drawing back in alarm

I will like hell! No knives for me. Nix! Nothing doing, Ned.

GALLOWAY

Christ! Don't be a louse!

JERRY

Shaking his head, and backing away

No— I'm not so keen to get into a jam.

GALLOWAY

How can you?

JERRY

They'd trace it back here fast enough.

GALLOWAY

Look at it, will you?

He holds it out, flat on his palm

JERRY

My God!—A shoemaker's knife. How the hell did you get it?

GALLOWAY

I've had it since I worked there in the shop.

JERRY

Oh!

Pause

Say, what's all this about?

GALLOWAY

What the hell is that to you? The less you know, the better.

JERRY

No, damned if I'm toting any knives, unless I know what for.

GALLOWAY

You're pretty cautious, aren't you?

JERRY

Turning away

Think what you like.

GALLOWAY

Wait! Listen to me, then.

He hesitates

It's for the kid.

JERRY

What kid?

GALLOWAY

The kid that had your job. The kid that's in the cooler now.

JERRY

For him? How could they get a knife in there?

GALLOWAY

Slowly; grimly

Well, it's been done before.

JERRY

How? I'm asking you.

GALLOWAY

What's the difference how?

JERRY

I'm all the way in, or all the way out.

GALLOWAY

After a pause

I've heard of slipping things in bucket feeds through six foot walls.

JERRY

Yeah?

GALLOWAY

Joe MacNamee is working in the cookhouse. The kid's been in the cooler seven days. He gets a bucket feed this afternoon.

JERRY

Pondering

I see.

GALLOWAY

There's just a chance it might get by that leather-headed cop.

JERRY

And then again it mightn't.

Pause

No!

He shakes his head

No, I'm not for it, Ned. It's too damn long a shot.

GALLOWAY

Angrily

God damn you! You make me spill the plant, and then crawl out. What kind of a man are you?

JERRY

No. It hasn't been so tough for him—the kid.

GALLOWAY

Yeah?

JERRY

They haven't put the lash on him, or beat him up.

GALLOWAY

Suppose they haven't. Have you ever been down there, where he is?

JERRY

No.

GALLOWAY

Well— I have! A straw tick on a stone floor—in the dark. You don't know what that feels like, Jerry.

JERRY

No.

GALLOWAY

They'll come down a dozen times a day to try and pry it out of you. They'll threaten anything, and promise anything.

JERRY

The bastards!

GALLOWAY

They'll stand there in your cell, and tell you what they had for dinner, and blow tobacco in your face, and talk to you about the sunshine, and the trees—and women.

JERRY

Christ!

GALLOWAY

They'll wait until you go to sleep, then snap a flashlight

in your face, and kick and cuff you to your feet, and yell into your ears! Oh,—they got lots of bright ideas!

JERRY

God!

GALLOWAY

You think it's not so tough for him, eh, Jerry?

JERRY

I guess I didn't think about it, Ned.

GALLOWAY

I'm only asking you to take the short and easy end of this.

JERRY

Yeah?

A pause

What good's a knife to him down there?

GALLOWAY

Not much, perhaps, but it's an out—a two way out—to end the torture, or—

JERRY

Yeah, yeah— I see.

GALLOWAY

The kid's been game—dead game. We owe him something.

JERRY

Yeah.

GALLOWAY

After a long pause

Well—?

He breaks off, conscious of some one coming from the right

JERRY

Whispering

O.K. Slip it to me.

GALLOWAY

Slipping him the knife

Beat it! Be quick!

JERRY *runs into the corridor;* GALLOWAY *goes quickly to the table as* MARY *comes in from the right.*

The Wall descends

END OF SCENE I

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SCENE II

The Warden's Office.

BRADY *is standing near the window, his hands clasped behind his back, a cigar between his teeth.* MR. SHERIDAN, *State's Attorney for the district, is sitting near the desk. He is a young man, thirty-five perhaps, rather countrified in dress, a bit self-conscious now and therefore somewhat pompous in manner and in speech.*

SHERIDAN

I don't know what your motives are, Mr. Brady. I assume they're proper ones.

BRADY

Grimly

Yeah. I think you can count on that, Mr. Sheridan.

SHERIDAN

Yes, no doubt. But the fact remains that the situation has become intolerably embarrassing.

BRADY

Yeah.

SHERIDAN

I'm State's Attorney for this district, Mr. Brady, and my office is under fire in the metropolitan press. I suppose you've seen to-day's papers?

BRADY

Yeah.

SHERIDAN

They're hitting pretty hard. This editorial here—

He taps the paper

—on why I don't do something on this case, and rather vicious things about integrity and motives.

BRADY

Yeah?

A fleeting glint of humor in his eyes

It isn't often a young man gets a chance to crash into the city press like that.

SHERIDAN

Yes, I appreciate that, Mr. Brady. But whether this is good publicity or not, I don't know. Anyway, I don't feel that I can afford to take the chance. What with an election coming on, and—

He hesitates

BRADY

Grimly

Yeah,—I know.

SHERIDAN

So you see just how I'm placed.

BRADY

Nodding

Yeah.

SHERIDAN

There was a killing here a week ago, and there's been no inquest yet. The coroner's done his duty. He's been out here three times. We had a jury sworn in and packed them out here in a bus and packed them back again. Each time you've asked to have the thing postponed.

BRADY

Yeah— That's right.

SHERIDAN

You won't produce the witnesses or testify, yourself. And all we know about the case is what has come out in the papers.

BRADY

And that's not much.

SHERIDAN

Not much except—a man is dead.

A pause; he slams his fist down on the desk

And somebody's got to pay for that, Mr. Brady, if we can make him. That's our duty. That's the law.

BRADY

Yeah.

A pause

SHERIDAN

Well, I've come up here, Mr. Brady, in a frank and friendly spirit, and I've laid my cards down on the table. And I ask you now as man to man—what are you going to do about it?

BRADY

Very quietly

Nothing.

SHERIDAN

Deceived by his manner; angrily

Just what do you mean by that?

BRADY

Just what I say.

SHERIDAN

Well, I want to tell you that you can't get away with that any longer. There'll be no more delay. I don't know what your motives are, but—

BRADY

Pent up fury finds a vent

You've said that once before, young man.

SHERIDAN

Backing up

I only mean—

BRADY

No matter what you mean. You've said enough. I'll do some talking now.

He comes over to the desk

Don't try to tell me how to run my job. I learned this game when you were in the cradle. I'm moving heaven and earth to get the bird that turned this trick. Well, give me a chance! Lay off! You and your coroner and inquest—what the hell can you do? You'll only ball things up.

SHERIDAN

Shouting to maintain his self-respect

I only want to do my duty, to serve the law and justice—

BRADY

Slamming his fist down on the desk

Justice! That's what I want, too. That's what I'm after.

SHERIDAN

But when?— How long is this thing to go on?

BRADY

Quietly

I don't know.

A pause. He shakes his head and sinks down in his chair

I don't know— I'm doing all I can to hasten it.

SHERIDAN

Well, I'm very sorry, Mr. Brady, but you can't expect me to accept as vague and indefinite an answer as that.

BRADY

Curiously

What are you going to do about it?

SHERIDAN

I'm going to report your unheard-of conduct to the prison commission, and to the attorney-general, and there'll be an inquest at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, Mr. Brady.

BRADY

Yeah.

The weariness and pain deepen in his eyes

SHERIDAN

And I'll have you called on a subpœna.

BRADY

Pondering

Yeah,—I guess you can do that—I guess you can.

He sighs

SHERIDAN

You know the law as well as I do.

BRADY

Nodding slowly

Yeah.

SHERIDAN

Very snappishly

G'day—

He bounces out

BRADY

Muttering

Fathead!—Fathead!

GLEASON *comes in. Eagerly*

Well?

GLEASON *shakes his head*

Yeah?

GLEASON

I can't get nothing out of him at all, sir. He won't say yes or no or anything or even nod or shake his head. It's just like talking to a corpse.

BRADY

Pondering

Yeah.

GLEASON

We're at him every hour of the day and night. We hardly let him get no sleep at all. I've tried most everything I know. He's stubborn as a mule. I took him in a bucket feed just now, the first he's had. I tried a little stunt that works sometimes—to leave him smell the food, and then just snatch it back.

BRADY

Wincing

Yeah.

GLEASON

It didn't do no good. I yelled at him till I was hoarse.

He sighs and shakes his head

BRADY

Did you tell him what I said?

GLEASON

Word for word. I told him: his parole's here; it came this morning; it's laying on your desk; he could be out and free in half an hour. Yes, sir, I told him that.

BRADY

Half to himself

By God, there must be something in a faith like that!

RINEWULF *comes in*

RINEWULF

You wish to see me, Warden?

BRADY

Yeah. Yeah, I do. Come in—I want to ask you about Graham.

RINEWULF

Graham?—Oh, yes!—I looked him over this morning, as you ordered. Physically, of course, a week of bread and water in the dark has an effect. Deterioration does occur. . . . But, I am less concerned with that than—

He hesitates

BRADY

Than what?

RINEWULF

I mean the spirit—the morale—the man, himself!

BRADY

Yeah.

RINEWULF

He is sullen, now. It is difficult to see into his eyes. And when one does, one sees that they are filled with bitterness and hate. There is no trace of what I found in them before—that spark worth saving. It is a pity—yes, a pity! Is that all?

BRADY

Yeah.

RINEWULF *goes out*

The phone rings. BRADY *picks it up*

Yeah?—Brady talking— Yeah— Yeah— Yeah— Yeah.

Increasing show of irritation

Nothing— Yeah— I've got no statement to make, I tell you!— No— No— That's right, you got it straight — No, not a word— Nothing— Go on, print what you like— Yeah!

He slams the receiver on the hook

To hell with all that tripe.

He looks at GLEASON; *seething with irritation*

God damn yellow press! The only thing they give a whoop about is circulation— To hell with them! They'd put Christ on the Cross again to get an extra on the street.

GLEASON

Sympathetically

Yes, sir, that's right.

A pause

What do you think we'd better do now, sir?

BRADY

I don't know. . . . I don't know. I've got to the end of my rope, Gleason.

GLEASON

Yes, sir—

BRADY

I've got till ten o'clock to-morrow morning. The law will have to take its course—that's all. He stands a damn good chance to get the rope—that kid! Well, by God,—I can't help it!

GLEASON

A lash across his back might loosen up his tongue.

BRADY

Grimly

No— We won't do that. It may be we've done *too much* now.

GLEASON

Clinging to his point

Of course you know best, Mr. Brady, but—

BRADY

Violently

No, no! No!— Leave him alone!— Lay off of him!— We're done.

GLEASON

Yes, sir— Is that all?

BRADY

Yeah.

GLEASON *goes out. It is growing dusk in the room.* BRADY *paces back and forth, across the floor, his hands behind his back. A few moments pass.* MARY *comes in from the corridor*

Hello, sweetheart!—How they coming, eh?

The wrinkles smooth out of his face. He smiles; strides over to her, and pinches her cheek

It's like a breath of heaven to have you back here, Mary— Yeah.

He kisses her, and pats her shoulder

What's wrong, old girl?—You look as solemn as an owl.

MARY

Quietly, evenly

What have you done with Robert Graham, father?

BRADY

Eh?—Who told you about him?

MARY

Aunt Ellen has told me—everything.

BRADY

She didn't lose much time.

MARY

What have you done with him?

BRADY

Now don't you worry about things you don't know

anything about. He's all right. Everything's all right —or will be. Yeah, you bet.

MARY

I want to know, father.

BRADY

You mustn't let the papers get your goat. I've gone to the mat with them before—all my life. I'll come out of this all right. Don't worry about me. Forget it now.

MARY

I'm not worrying about you, father—I'm worrying about him.

BRADY

Yeah?

He looks at her quickly, curiously

Why?

MARY

Well, for one reason—because you put him here.

BRADY

Who told you that?

MARY

I know—that's all. I've taken the trouble to find out everything about him.

BRADY

Yeah?

A pause

MARY

Where is he?

BRADY

He sits on the edge of the desk; quietly

In the dungeon.

MARY

She catches her breath

For what?

BRADY

Moistening the wrapper of his cigar

Technically, for an infringement of the prison rules. . . . Practically—to save his life, perhaps.

MARY

Yes?

A pause

What good is it to save a man, father, if you destroy him while you're doing it?

BRADY

The creases deepen in his brow; slowly

Yeah—that's right, Mary. . . . I thought of that, myself.

MARY

A broken thing—what good is that to any one or to itself? Prisons are filled with broken men—with broken minds and souls—twisted and distorted! What good is it to save a man for that? He would be better—dead!

BRADY

His chin is heavy on his chest

Yeah . . . I thought of that.

MARY

This man was clean and fine—and—*straight.* What would he be when you had broken him?

BRADY

Standing up. With passionate impatience

Yeah, yeah, that's all right. I see your point. I've thought of all that stuff, myself. But what am I going to do? His parole's laying here.

He picks it up from the desk, and slaps it with his hand

It's taken me six months to get it— I want to get him out of here. I want to turn him loose. Well, then, I can't. He's tied my hands— I can't.

He throws the paper down, and strides across the room

MARY

Tensely

You can!—You must!

BRADY

Yeah?—What would you do?

MARY

I'd set him free to-night.

BRADY

Yeah?

He laughs, harshly

You're just a kid. You don't know anything about these things.

MARY

Passionately

I do. I do.—I'd set him free, and then I'd fight for him. I'd get behind him, and I'd see him through. If he were free, he'd have a chance. He has done nothing wrong. He's only doing what he thinks is right. It's only what you think that counts.

BRADY

Listening with narrowed eyes

Yeah.

MARY

A man like you could find a way to save him. Delays and disagreements, and what not. You know the way those things are done, father. You've often told me of the things they've done to you. He'd be outside and free. He'd have a chance. You'd get him off, father. You know you could.

BRADY

Calmly

You're crazy, Mary.

MARY

I'm not. You could do that. You know you could.

BRADY

Yeah—and what would they do to me—for that?

MARY

What does it matter?

BRADY

Matter?

He stares at her

You don't know what you're saying, girl. You don't know what it means. They'd just bust me higher than a kite. I'm only hanging by a shoe-string now. They're after me. They're only waiting for a chance. Well, you know that— And an election coming on. . . .

MARY

But, if it's right—

BRADY

Interrupting passionately

Right!—Yeah, what's that?—You talk as if I'd done a crime, myself. I've only done my duty all my life— my duty by the public and the law— I'm not God. I didn't make things right or wrong. I didn't make the law. There's nothing on my head. I don't owe any man the scrap of future left to me.

She tries to speak; he drowns her out

No, no, you're crazy. You're just a kid. You don't know what it means. I've done the best I could for him— I'm through— I'm done— The law must take its course.

MARY

Gasping

No.

She runs to his side, and grasps his sleeve; desperately

No. You can't do that— You can't.

He stares at her, suddenly startled and oppressed

by vague concern, and very gently he disengages her hands from his sleeve, and holds them in his own

BRADY

Gently, but with a tremor in his voice

Say,—what's gotten into you?—What do you mean?—What's back of all this stuff?

MARY

Stammering

I—

She turns away her head

BRADY

Yeah?

He holds fast to her hands

Come on, sweetheart, let's get right down to cases on this thing. What's up?

MARY

Bravely; looking him squarely in the eyes

I love him, father.

BRADY

Yeah?

He drops her hands

Yeah?

A long pause

Is that on the level, Mary?

MARY

Yes.

BRADY

Evenly; wearily

Why didn't you tell me that at first?

MARY

I wanted you to do it, because it was right—not just for me!

BRADY

Yeah— I see.

He nods slowly. A pause

How long has this been going on?

MARY

It hasn't gone at all. He's never said a thing to me, but—well, I read it in his eyes. That's why I went away: to see, to find out just how much I cared,—and whether it would make a difference to me that he had been—in prison.

BRADY

Nodding

Yeah.

MARY

And I know now that it doesn't.

A pause

I'm sorry if it hurts you, father, but—

BRADY

With an effort

No.

A pause

No. You can't help that, Mary. Love—you have to

take it when and where it comes. You're not a child. You've always had a level head. I wouldn't set myself against a thing like that— That's up to you. Yeah.

He sighs

I guess that's one thing that the law don't cover.

MARY

Searching his eyes; tremulously

What—what will you do, father?

BRADY

There's just one answer left to that, Mary—I'd turn the demons out of hell—for you.

MARY

Oh!

And she sways a little on her feet

BRADY

Don't you worry, sweetheart.

He goes to her, and puts his arm around her shoulders

We'll see him through, somehow—some way. He'll never serve another day—if we can help it! And I guess we can. Yeah, I guess we can—some way.

He kisses her on the forehead. She is close to tears

Buck up, old girl, now! Steady!

MARY

Smiling into his eyes

Yes—father.

BRADY

Yeah.

He nods, smiles back at her through all the creases in his face, but his teeth are set, and his lips tight. He turns away and crosses slowly, and heavily, to his desk, and sinks into his chair, stifling a groan, turning it off into a cough. And he picks up the telephone. His voice is level, unnaturally so

Warden talking. . . . Find Captain Gleason, and tell him to send Number two-three-four-nine-nine up to my office. . . . Yeah. . . . That's right. . . . Yeah.

MARY

Thank you, father.

The Wall descends

END OF SCENE II

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SCENE III

The Dungeon.
Total darkness.

GLEASON

Come now, look sharp, for God's sake, Kurtz!—I was just for setting down to my supper. I don't want to spend the night in here.

Act Three, SCENE III, The Dungeon

KURTZ

Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

GLEASON

Have you got a pocket flash?

KURTZ

Yes, sir.

GLEASON

Then make a light, for God's sake!

A thin beam sprays about, illuminating nothing

There's a light switch on the wall over there. Get a move on, will you!

KURTZ

Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

He steps out briskly, and trips

Ach, I stumbled!

GLEASON

Yeah, I heard you.

A pause. The switch clicks. The light comes on

A narrow, black tunnel crossing the stage from side to side. The entrance is beyond vision at the left. In the back wall of the tunnel are several low, steel doors. Perforations through the steel no bigger than a lead pencil, form crosses in the center of each door. The light comes from dim bulbs set deep in the arches of the doorways. The switch which controls the light is close beside the center door.

GLEASON

Don't tell me you've forgot the key.

KURTZ

No, no, I've got it right here, Captain.

GLEASON

Yeah, well, open up the cage. Step lively now.

He paces to the end of the tunnel

KURTZ

Yes, sir.

He unlocks the door and pushes it slowly open; shouting gruffly

Come out here, you!

A pause

Come out, you hear what I say?—The Captain wants to see you.

GLEASON *tramps back.* KURTZ *takes out his pocket flash and explores the inky darkness*

GLEASON

Get him out of there.

KURTZ

He's laying down there in the corner.

GLEASON

Go in and drag him out.

KURTZ

Yes, sir.

He disappears into the cell; in a moment he returns

I think he's sick, Captain.

GLEASON

Sick?—Hell! He was all right an hour ago.

KURTZ

Maybe, but now I think he's sick—unconscious.

GLEASON

You're nuts! Why would he be?

KURTZ

You smashed him pretty hard to-day, Captain.

GLEASON

I only hit him once, and with my fist. Give me that flash.

He snatches it

By God, I'll give him something to be sick about.

He tramps into the cell

What's wrong with you? Come now, get up!—No monkey tricks!—I'm onto all this stuff— Get up, I say!—You hear me?

A pause

God damn your soul!—Get up!—Get up!

The sound of blows. He reappears

By God, he may be sick at that.

KURTZ

That's just what I thought, Captain.

GLEASON

Fuming

God damn the luck! I'd like to have my way for once.

I'd straighten out this crook and not be wasting all my time and half my meals.—Well, it does no good to gas about it. Go fetch the doctor. I'll wait here.

KURTZ

Yes, sir.— Will I lock the door again?

GLEASON

No, leave it!— Hurry up!

KURTZ

Yes, sir.

He hurries out

GLEASON

Shouting after him

Step on it now!—Be quick!

He paces the length of the tunnel and back again, grumbling to himself

You can't do nothing with these mollycoddle ways.—A crook's a crook,—that's all there is about it.—Spare the rod and spoil the child.

He pauses beneath a light beyond the open door and looks at his watch

GRAHAM'S *face appears in the doorway directly at his back. His face is dirty and contorted; his clothing torn; his feet bare. A knife blade glitters in his hand. Slowly his other hand steals around the corner feeling for the light switch.—Click, the lights are out*

Act Three, Scene IV, The Prison Yard

GLEASON

Eh?—What's that?—God!

A choking, strangling sound; and the thud of a falling body

END OF SCENE III

.....

SCENE IV

The Prison Yard.

A concrete wall which spans the stage, its lofty top unseen, its surface barely visible in starlight. Angles in the wall create black shadows. In one of these there is, invisible, a steel-barred gate.

A VOICE

High up on the wall and at the right

It's goddam cold to-night. The frost gets right into my bones.

SECOND VOICE

Why don't you get a soft job in the yard?

GRAHAM *comes in from the right, a shadow against the black mass of the wall. He stops, listening to the voices*

FIRST VOICE

By God, I ought to have one! I been here long enough.

SECOND VOICE

Laughing

Ain't you got no influence up in town?

FIRST VOICE

Hell! Them suckers never give you nothing but a glad hand.

SECOND VOICE

You said a mouthful—

GRAHAM *has moved a step. A searchlight floods down from the right and just in front of him. He cowers back*

FIRST VOICE

What's wrong?

SECOND VOICE

I thought I seen something move down there.

The light snaps off

FIRST VOICE

You're getting old, I guess.

The boy moves slowly on, feeling his way against the wall. From the left a light shoots down full on him. He stops in his tracks blinded by the glare, and throws his arm up to his eyes

THIRD VOICE

High up above the light

Pull up there, you!—Don't move!—I've got you covered with a thirty-thirty, bo'.—Now where the hell do

you think you're going strolling around the yard this time of night.—Look up here at me, you!

GRAHAM *slowly raises his head*

FOURTH VOICE

Close by the first

Lay off!—That's the bird that drives the Warden's car.

THIRD VOICE

I thought they had him in the cooler.

FOURTH VOICE

They did. I guess they let him out.

THIRD VOICE

O.K.

He shouts down at the boy

Move on your feet!—Go on!—Start out!

GRAHAM *goes on, feeling his way. Then in the angle of the wall a light flames down on him from the archway of the gate. Again he stops and throws his arm up to his eyes*

FIFTH VOICE

Behind the gate

Hey! What the hell!—Look at me, you!—Take your hand down from your face!

The boy drops his arm

Oho! So it's you, Bob. Why didn't you say so, eh?—I was close to plugging you that time.—So they let you out, eh?—Well, you can tell the world now what the cooler's like.

He laughs

Jesus, but you look tough!—You need a shave.—The Warden said you were to come right up.— Come in.

A crash of drawn bolts. The light goes out

END OF SCENE IV

.....

SCENE V

The Office.

BRADY *is seated behind his desk, a cigar gripped between his teeth. He is writing.*

MARY *is sitting at the end of the desk.*

There is an old brown suit case by the door which leads out to the stairs.

Some moments pass. There is no sound save the scratch of Brady's pen.

JERRY *comes in from the stairs and pauses just inside the door.*

BRADY

Looking up

Well?

JERRY

The car is at the gate, sir.

BRADY

Yeah.

He reflects for a moment

Take that suit case down and put it in the car and wait there.

JERRY

Yes, sir.

He picks up the bag

BRADY

Hesitantly

I'm—turning a man out to-night.—I'll send him down in a few minutes.—You will drive him to the station.

JERRY

Yes, sir.

BRADY

His clothes are in that bag.

JERRY

Yes, sir.

BRADY

That's all.

He resumes his writing as Jerry leaves the room. Again some moments pass. The phone rings. He picks it up

BRADY

Yeah?—Let him come up.—Yeah.

The girl is watching him eagerly. He hangs up the receiver. Gently, reassuringly

Yeah—Yeah—

She catches her breath and fixes her eyes upon the door. He takes a bill from his pocket and slips it into an envelope which he has just addressed; then picks up from the desk a "pass out" slip which he has filled in; also the parole order. He folds the latter to convenient size, and sits there waiting, holding the three items in his hand

In a moment GRAHAM *shuffles into the room. The girl starts to her feet and takes a step toward him. He stops abruptly, cringes back, and looks down at the floor*

BRADY

Kindly

Come in, Bob.—Come in, my boy.

GRAHAM *shuffles a few steps toward the desk*

I'm sorry for—what's happened.—I've done the best I could—for you—for every one.—Well—

He stifles a sigh. The boy does not raise his head

Yeah—

There is a doubtful, half embarrassed air about him

Your parole has come. I'm going to send you out—to-night.

The boy raises his head and stares at him dully. He goes on as if he were explaining to a child

Yeah, that's right, Bob.—I've got it here, you see.—It

only came this morning.—And here's a pass to take you through the gate.—My driver's waiting there. He'll take you to the station.—Your—Your clothes are in the car.

He pauses. The boy tries to speak but only shakes his head

Yeah.—Sure.—There's some money in this envelope. You go to the address that's on it, and just wait there until you hear from me.

GRAHAM

Hoarsely

No.

BRADY

Yeah.

He nods

We'll beat them, Bob.—I don't know how, but—well, beat them—some way.

GRAHAM

No.—It's too late.

BRADY

Vaguely

Too late?—No.—I—I'll see you get a break. By God, I will!

GRAHAM

Shaking his head

No. No, you can't,—not now.

BRADY

Standing up

What?—What do you mean?

The boy drops his head

Why do you say that, eh?

RINEWULF *comes into the room*

BRADY

Eh?—What is it, Doctor?

RINEWULF

Advancing to the desk

Gleason is dead.—Stabbed in the back.—Here is the knife.

He holds it up

A shoemaker's knife, I think.

He drops it on the desk

GRAHAM

Dully

I killed him.

MARY

Oh, God!

BRADY

Think what you're saying, boy!

GRAHAM

His eyes upon the girl

I killed him. I didn't know, you see.—I thought he'd only come to torture me again. I couldn't stand it any more. I didn't have the strength. He's come so many times to coax and plead and threaten. And in the night he's waked me up to try to make me tell.—I couldn't stand it any more.—I was afraid I might give up.

MARY

Moaning

Oh, God!

She covers her eyes with her hands and turns her head away

GRAHAM

To Brady now, a note of defiance in his voice

I killed him.—I'm not sorry.—No one has any right to make another being suffer as I did—in there.

BRADY

His face contorted

Yeah—Yeah—

MARY

Desperately

Father!

BRADY

I—I can't beat this, Mary,—I can't.

He spreads out his hands helplessly

MARY

But—

The telephone upon the desk begins to ring and will ring intermittently until the end. She breaks off to stare at it; meets RINEWULF'S *eyes across the desk*

RINEWULF

Gently

Already it is known. The prison in alarm. The guards are searching for him in the yard.

MARY

Turning back to BRADY

No.—God!—There must be some way—some way—

BRADY

Thickly

Nothing, Mary,—nothing.

Faintly at first but growing steadily stronger, the dismal wail of the prison siren. Slowly the boy's face turns toward the window

MARY

Her arms outstretched

Father!—Father!

The siren interrupts her, and her eyes follow RINEWULF'S *toward the window*

BRADY

Almost inarticulately

It—It's just the way things break sometimes,—the way —they break.

The siren drowns his voice. It shrieks and screams. The whole house rocks with it

The wall descends.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

END OF ACT THREE

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